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Life after death and the
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LIFE AFTER DEATH

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LIFE AFTER DEATH

AND

The Future of the Kingdom of God

BY

BISHOP

LARS NIELSEN DAHLE

KNIGHT OF ST. OLAF

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORSE

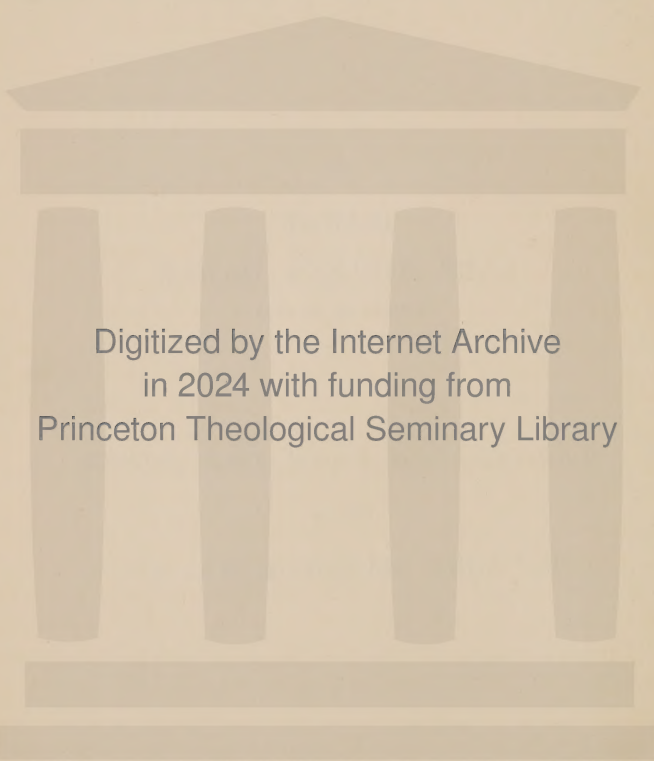
BY THE

REV. JOHN BEVERIDGE, M.A., B.D.

EDINBURGH

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1896



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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

TO certain departments of literature, in recent years, Norwegian authors have contributed works that have received almost as much attention in foreign countries as at home. But although some Norwegian theologians have made a reputation for themselves in Scandinavia and Germany, it may be said that in Britain they are practically unknown. Several more or less satisfactory reasons might be offered in explanation, such as that few of our theological scholars are sufficiently acquainted with Norwegian to read with appreciation these authors in the original, and that generally their books are written from such an ultra-Lutheran and State-Church point of view that they are unacceptable to those who have no love for Erastianism, or are more Calvinistic than Lutheran in their sympathies.

Life after Death is written by one of the foremost thinkers in Norway, on a subject that is of perennial interest, and that has in most countries in our own day been attracting greater attention than at any previous period. It is a book deserving of perusal both for the sake of the information it gives and the opportunity it affords for comparing our own theories with the views of a writer like Bishop Dahle, whose standpoint, environment, language, and country are different from ours. Our interest is likewise excited by the fact that the author of the book, although of high reputation in other lands, is here introduced to English readers, and that the language in which he writes is one from which, so far as we remember, no book of first-class theological moment has yet been translated.

Lars Nielsen Dahle was born in 1843 of peasant parents, who had been considerably influenced by the Haugian revival that stirred the whole of Norway in the early part of the century. Dahle's parents died when their son was but a boy. His thirst for knowledge led him to enter a seminary, not because he desired to be a teacher, but because he wished to reach the University. About his twentieth year he was led to consecrate his life to the cause of missions, and he matriculated at the Missionary College at Stavanger. His progress and proficiency were so great that at the end of three years he was set free to complete his training at Christiania. Thus the University door was opened for him after all. He threw himself with enthusiasm into his studies, devoting special attention to the Old Testament, under Professor Caspari, and to the Semitic languages. In 1869 he proceeded to the Continent to still further extend his knowledge and equip himself for missionary work. In 1870 he set out for Madagascar. On the way he spent some time in Zululand, where he received ordination from Bishop Schreuder, who at that time was the supreme head of the extensive missionary work of the Norwegian Church.

Although the Norwegian Church had begun missionary work in Madagascar in 1865, yet the missionaries for a long time had neither consul nor treaty to appeal to when difficulties arose, and their position was complicated by the fact that at first both the Malagasy and the Government looked with disfavour on their work. But the Norwegian Church has a very good principle in the planting of its missions, a principle that many other Churches might follow with advantage; it never enters a field where other evangelical forces are already at work. The Norwegians were thus led to choose Betsilealand as the sphere of their operations, and in the course of time the Malagasy mistrust was somewhat allayed. Eventually it became necessary to have a church in the capital for the Betsilean Christians who betook themselves thither, and to organize a training institution for the purpose of educating native youths as teachers, and preparing promising Christians to be preachers. Dahle had to overcome all the difficulties and obstacles in the way of

establishing the training institution in Antananarivo, the capital. As its superintendent for several years, he came into frequent contact with the missionaries of other Churches, and he formed intimate friendships with many of them.

Dahle was one of the leaders of the International Commission of Protestant missionaries who undertook the work of translating the Bible from the originals into Malagasy; and of them all, not one was better fitted by natural ability and attainments for such an important task. It was his joy and privilege to participate in that work from its inception in 1873 to its close in 1887; indeed, only one other of those who began the translation was permitted to see the successful completion of their labours.

In 1877, at the age of thirty-four, Dahle was appointed Bishop of the Norwegian Missionary Church in Madagascar. His duties included the administering of everything connected with the mission, and involved many delicate negotiations with the Government.

In spite of all his other work, Dahle's literary zeal was unflagging. Of his many writings, we may name *A Book of Family Worship*, *Biblical Archaeology*, *Outlines of Religious Instruction for Native Teachers*, *Christian Dogmatics*, *Introduction to the Gospels*, *Symbolism*, *Madagascar and its Inhabitants*, *Moral Philosophy*, *Popular Exposition of the Prophet Jonah*.

Of the results of his philological investigations we only mention *Specimens of Malagasy Folk-Lore*. These Malagasy popular legends, traditions, and songs were carefully collected by Dahle from many quarters, and had never previously been printed.

Dahle has also written on the Arabic influence on the Malagasy language, and several treatises on the languages and civilisation of Madagascar. These treatises evoked much attention and controversy. It was formerly supposed that the island had been peopled by tribes from the African mainland, but it is now generally admitted that Dahle has proved incontrovertibly that the Malays had come down from Asia and settled in Madagascar.

Dahle's health compelled him reluctantly to leave Madagascar and return to Norway in 1888; and he now directs all

the missionary work of the Norwegian Church. In recognition of the valuable services he has rendered to missionary enterprise and to literature, King Oscar has bestowed upon Bishop Dahle the high dignity of the Order of St. Olaf; and many scientific and literary societies have vied with each other in their recognition of the great work he has done.

Bishop Dahle is a very able preacher, and whenever he is to appear great crowds gather. He has a peculiar fervour and a power of speech that charm his audience. His eloquence, however, is not his only claim to be heard, for the clearness of his utterances and the logic of his arguments, and his fairness to opponents, almost invariably force one to accept the conclusions at which Dahle has arrived. In addition to these, his skill in putting what he has to say in a striking way, and his characteristic manner of arguing from the hearer's standpoint, make him one of the most gifted speakers among the clergy of his native land.

Life after Death will speak for itself. It is with pleasure and confidence we introduce, through this volume, such a distinguished Norwegian author to English readers.

WOLVERHAMPTON, *November* 1896.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

IN *Life after Death* it has been our aim to afford the reader a survey of the main features of the Biblical doctrine of "the last things," both as concerns the individual and the Church.

The rule laid down, and followed to the best of our ability, has been to accept no guide except Holy Writ; and we venture to hope that we have succeeded in our endeavours to be faithful to our rule.

In all doubtful points we have tried to draw a clear distinction between what is actually revealed to us in Scripture, what is only hinted at, and what is simply the result of more or less ingenious human speculation.

We have specially avoided, as far as possible, all words and phrases which might indeed have given the book a more "learned appearance," but would have been likely to confuse the ordinary reader or make him stumble. This principle has certainly increased our difficulties; but we trust that it has not impaired the thoroughness of the investigation. Scholars will know that earnest research and conclusive reasoning are not dependent upon technicalities.

We have had the opportunity of examining the present

translation, and have great pleasure in stating that we have found it to be very careful, and, so far as we can judge, to render admirably the spirit of the original.

Our heartfelt prayer is that Almighty God, of His infinite grace, may bless this book and make it a blessing, to the glory of His great name.

L. DAHLE.

STAVANGER, *September* 1896.

CONTENTS



	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I

PART I

THE FUTURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL	24
<i>A.</i> —DEATH	24
<i>B.</i> —IMMORTALITY	59
<i>C.</i> —INTERMEDIATE STATE	84
The Soul's Relations in this State	122
Hades	150
Conversion after Death	168
Christ's Preaching in the Kingdom of Death	190
1. Purgatory	210
2. Prayer for the Dead	215
3. Unbaptized Children and Salvation	219

PART II

THE FUTURE OF GOD'S KINGDOM ON THE EARTH	228
<i>A.</i> —SURVEY OF THE CONTENTS OF THE REVELATION	232
<i>B.</i> —GREAT EVENTS PREPARING FOR THE END	268
1. The Gospel Preached to all Nations	273
2. The Conversion of the Jews	278
<i>C.</i> —GREAT EVENTS AT THE TIME OF THE END	319
1. Antichrist	320
2. The Millennial Kingdom	354
3. The Last Conflict	387

PART III

	PAGE
THE END	391
1. The Lord's Appearing	391
2. The Resurrection	398
3. The Judgment	418
4. Perdition	429
5. The Transformation of Nature	439
6. Eternal Life	442

LIFE AFTER DEATH

INTRODUCTION

“**B**UT now abideth faith, hope, love, these three” (1 Cor. xiii. 13 R.V.). Thus the Apostle Paul closes his well-known chapter on “the greatest thing in the world”—Christian love. From this, the prince of all Church Fathers, Augustine, took occasion to set forth connectedly the whole doctrine of salvation as a doctrine of faith, hope, and love.¹ And one of the most vigorous and best versed in Scripture of the theologians of our century has done the same.² “Faith,” says the brilliant Wilhelm Beck, “is the man, Love the woman, and the union of both is a happy marriage, the child of which is Hope.” Christianity is certainly, first and foremost, faith working in love; but it is likewise most emphatically a religion of hope. As Christians, we are no doubt saved through faith (Eph. ii. 8); but since this is the unfailing ground of hope, and the fulfilment of hope is the final goal of complete salvation, then it is said with equal justice that we are saved by hope (Rom. viii. 24), begotten again unto a lively hope (1 Pet. i. 3), a hope which maketh not ashamed (Rom. v. 5). The shield of faith, and hope’s helmet of salvation, are equally important and necessary articles of our Christian armour (Eph. vi. 16, 17).

But what is hope? Hope is the face of faith turned to the future. Both faith and hope take up and embrace unseen blessings; but faith looks to the past and the present,

¹ Enchir. ad Laur. *De fide, spe et caritate*.

² Beck of Tübingen, who, however, only managed to treat of faith and love.

hope to the future. In faith we possess the grace of God, and already feel saved by it. But this salvation is still only in its beginning. In hope we look forward to its further development and completion. Without this hope faith would have no value; for it is really not for the sake of the present life, not for the sake of the moment that we seek salvation, but for the sake of the infinite future embraced by hope. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19).

Now if this is the case, hope is quite as necessary for us as faith and love; and then it is likewise right and fitting that, by the side of our doctrine of faith and doctrine of love, we should also have a doctrine of hope; and just such a doctrine it is our present purpose to attempt to set forth.

However, we must not forget that the constant companion of hope, its inseparable *alter ego* during our earthly pilgrimage, is fear. To the question of what we may hope, there naturally connects itself a question concerning what we have to fear. Even of the believer himself this holds good; for whilst he rejoices in the thought of the fulfilment of his salvation, yet he is well aware that he may let it slip from him, not because God is not faithful, but because man himself is frail and may let go his hold of the rock of salvation to which he has been clinging. And so he must, in spite of his glorious hope, work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. No doubt this is mainly true of our earthly existence, but yet it is also true of the conflict with the last enemy, death, and of the anxiety about what lies beyond death.

And just as hope mingles with fear when it refers to our own future, so does it when we think of the Church which only after conflicts, many and hard, shall attain its full perfection. But our fear becomes greatest of all when we allow our thought to dwell upon the future of the many for whom there is so little to hope, because they live without God and therefore without hope. And then, too, when these are of our own kin, we cannot avoid thinking of their terrible future, and their final sentence which will be delivered at that judgment which is to close their career.

Consequently, although the Christian's future is chiefly

and peculiarly a subject of hope, yet he cannot dwell on the future without also touching on what is a subject of fear; partly because he has a natural aversion to the conflict with "the last enemy," and to death and the grave as the wages of sin; partly because he feels himself closely bound to a Church which has still great battles to wage; and partly, too, because he is related to the whole human family, of which so many members pass away from their earthly life in a state of hopelessness.

For the reasons indicated the question about the future becomes a double one: What have we to hope? and what have we to fear?

If we regard this double question a little more closely, however, we shall find that it resolves itself into several, according to the persons whom we look upon as subjects of fear or hope.

That which most nearly touches and interests us, is the state of ourselves, the state of individuals, when we leave this world behind; in other words, death, and that which immediately follows it. What is death itself? Has our soul a continued existence after death? *i.e.* is there an immortality of the soul? And in what condition is the soul whilst it is separated from the body and from the Church militant on earth?

But we cannot waive the future of the Church which we leave behind. What will the state of the Church be whilst our body slumbers in the bosom of the earth, and our spirit is separated from its earthly tabernacle? What dangers will it be exposed to, what opponents will rise against it, what battles will it have to fight, what victories will it win, what conquests will it make, what stages of development will it pass through before it has completed its earthly career? All these are questions which our thoughts cannot avoid when they turn to the future.

Finally, what will happen when the earthly course of the Church has come to an end, and the whole Church militant along with all its individual former members will meet Him, "who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing"? What signs will announce His advent? How will His

coming itself be? What transformation will there, at that coming, take place in the dead (the resurrection), and in the living, and in the whole creation? What will be the nature of the judgment which is to decide their future condition to all eternity, whether it be to death, or to life? And, in conclusion, what is the nature of this death, and that life?

Only when we have received the answer to all these questions are we fully informed about what we have to fear or hope.

The treatment of these matters, therefore, comes to embrace the following sections:—

1. The future of the individual, from and including death, until Christ's final advent.
2. The future of God's kingdom on earth until Christ's final advent.
3. The Lord's final advent and its results to the individual, to the Church universal, and to the whole creation.

OUR SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Now, what sources of information on this subject do we possess? It is a fruitless task to attempt to investigate these matters thoroughly if there is no sure, authoritative source from which we can draw our knowledge of them.

Of such sources the following may be mentioned:—

1. *Experience*, immediate observation. There is no doubt that, as far as it goes, this is certainly the best and most convenient source. But, unfortunately, it almost altogether fails us here. Here the doctrine of hope so completely differs from the doctrine of faith. Every believer knows by *experience* what happened when he became a believer. Awakening, enlightening, confession of sin, penitence, grief, the believing acceptance of God's grace, regeneration, etc., are all subjects of experience. The individual believer has himself experienced these, and so also have all his believing fellow-Christians. Here he can rely not only upon his own experience, but also on the experiences of Christians in all

ages, when he wishes to make known what a possession his Christian faith is. Here too, no doubt, it is the case that the subject of faith is invisible, in so far as God and the gracious influences proceeding from Him cannot be seen. But partly they may be *experienced* without being seen, and partly indeed the great facts of salvation (Christ's life, passion, death, and resurrection) have actually once been subjects of immediate observation by trustworthy witnesses who have told us what they saw and heard. But it is a very different matter when we turn to the subjects of hope, from which no such experience is forthcoming.

But, one may say, is this quite true? Are there not many who have risen from the dead and returned to the earth? Yes, truly, but they have not communicated to us anything about their experiences. Some of them, however, like the widow's son of Sarepta, the Shunammite woman's son, and the daughter of Jairus, were only on the way to the portals of the life beyond, when they were called back to earthly life, and so they would probably only have been able to tell us something about death itself, but very little about the life beyond. We have not a single word about what they experienced when they passed through the gloomy portal. Others, such as Tabitha and the widow's son of Nain, had gone further, but even about their experiences the Scripture is completely silent. Then, finally, we have Lazarus, who had been dead four days when the Lord called him back to life. What would not any one of us have given for a conversation with him about death and the existence that follows death!

But even he is silent as the grave from which he rose. And neither Moses nor Elijah, who were with the Saviour on the Mount of Transfiguration, opened his mouth to enlighten us. When Samuel was conjured forth by the witch of Endor, he certainly spoke, but he did not say one word about the condition in the kingdom of death. Paul, whilst he was still alive, was uplifted to the third heaven, and saw and heard what was unutterable—but on that very account he was not permitted to say anything about it (2 Cor. xii. 4). The Saviour conversed with His disciples during the forty days after His death and resurrection, "speaking of the things

pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts i. 3); but from all that is reported of these conversations they appear to have been on the subject of God's kingdom here on earth, especially of the apostles' future work in that kingdom, and of the way in which the Lord would fit them for that work. There is no evidence whatever that He told them anything about His meeting with the malefactor in paradise, or about His descent into the kingdom of the dead. When the apostle, at a later period, tells us of the latter (1 Pet. iii. 18 *et seq.*), we are left in utter ignorance of how far the statement depends upon communications from the Saviour during the forty days, or upon a special revelation.

So far, then, as scriptural references go, we have not one single communication derived from experience of the state hereafter.

However, things are very different when we inquire of our modern visionaries and spiritualists. Old Swedenborg, for instance, maintained that he had seen the whole of the life beyond, just as he also imagined that he had had long conversations with the spirits of deceased persons. But he scarcely gives the impression of being, at that period of his life, a normal mortal in whose words any confidence can be placed. And what he presumes to communicate is really very scanty; it is confined to such statements as that life beyond the grave is practically a repetition of the earthly life in all its forms,—a subject we shall not enter into here, since it has little or nothing to do with the task in hand.

The *mediums* of our day, moreover, assert, as is well known, that they are at any time able to place themselves in communication with the spirits of the deceased. We do not venture by any means to assert that this is "sheer humbug"; indeed, we think it quite possible that they may have some intercourse with spirits. But then, what is it that these spirits, according to the statements of the spiritualists themselves, have to communicate about the state beyond the grave? Practically nothing. What these "spirits" of spiritualism almost exclusively occupy themselves with, is the *earthly life* to which their thoughts still seem to cling; where this or that person at present lives; what has happened here

or there; how much money is in a purse; what has become of this or that lost article;—such trifles, indeed, as often lie on the borders of the juggler's domain, are the things they condescend to communicate. If you venture into the *spiritual sphere*, they show themselves—as Martensen says in his *Jacob Böhme*—to be quite bewildered, whether that is due to the fact that these *spirits*, from their whole state and position, do not know any more, or to this, that God does not permit them to say anything on the subject, because He does not wish that men should seek the living amongst the dead, but “Should not a people seek unto their God?” (Isa. viii. 19). “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Luke xvi. 29). Consequently, from them we never can expect any exact information about the state after death. They can only be of service as an evidence of the *immortality of the soul*, and in this connection we shall return to them again.

2. *Human speculation and the conjectures of the human mind.*—We dare not altogether reject this source of knowledge about these things even if we cannot attribute to them any special value. If God has created us for immortality, then it is natural to expect that in the mind of man there will likewise be dim conjectures about this immortality, and, as a matter of fact, we see that almost every race has some idea of a kind of immortality; just as also most pagan philosophers, or philosophers reasoning in a perfectly pagan manner, have arrived at the conclusion that such an idea must be assumed, a point we shall more particularly dwell upon when we come to consider the immortality of the soul. But it is with this as with conscience in the natural man,—it teaches us certainly that we have duties and responsibilities, but as to what these duties in detail are, it gives us only very vague and scanty information. So also is it with immortality and the state after death. The human mind, unaided, can reach no further than to conjecture that there is an existence beyond the grave; in other words, that all is not over at death. But whenever the question is raised as to what the state of the individual after death is, then we are left in complete

perplexity, and must be content with idle guesses, as the notions of all pagan nations indicate, and as we, later on, shall have many opportunities of observing.

3. *The notions of different nations.*—From what has already been stated it will be quite evident that we have little to expect from the conclusions about those things that have been arrived at by the different nations, since these have been derived from the very unsatisfactory sources which we have previously referred to. Of course there are those who, in these notions about the future state, see the relics of an original revelation at the beginning of the race, and therefore attribute to them a more considerable and more independent value. And even if we dared assume that they had such an origin—which, however, is not at all probable—then they would at any rate be so distorted that they could give us no guidance towards recognising the amount of truth they contain. Essentially, therefore, they are only important as a proof of the impossibility of the human mind avoiding the supposition that there is a life after this.

4. *Analogies in nature.*—Analogies have been pointed out in the domain of nature as a subject of experience, and that partly in human life, partly in the world of nature around us. And it cannot be denied that nature is full of such analogies.

We need only call to mind that “sleep is the brother of death,” and that visions and dreams, ecstasies and raptures, in which the soul hovers about while the body lies as if it were dead, bear an unmistakable resemblance to what will probably take place when the soul forsakes the body; and at all events these may serve as proofs of the soul’s independence, and the immortality of the soul presupposes that the soul can continue to exist and act even after it has been separated from the body. And in the grain of wheat which is buried in the ground in order to die and rise again in a renewed form, the Word of God itself has seen an image of what shall happen to man (1 Cor. xv. 36–38, 42). The renewing of the whole creation which takes place every spring, when nature awakens after the long lethargy of winter, preaches to us incessantly of the spring of Resurrec-

tion and the summer of Eternity. And if we seek for an analogy in the domain of our Christian spiritual life, then we have such an one in the new life, that "new creature" which is formed in us by the miracle of regeneration. No doubt this is not begotten of our natural life and by the aid of its own forces; but yet it is a reproduction of our own being, the true man in us, and answers practically to the glorified body that shall one day spring from the corruptible seed which is laid in the grave, just as the new heaven and the new earth are but the old in glorified form. The Lord Himself directs attention to this analogy when He calls the renewing of all things at the end of the world a regeneration (Matt. xix. 28).

5. *Scripture*.—We now come to the last, and, in reality, the only trustworthy source of knowledge about the future, God's own Word, since we have already seen that all others give us only meagre results. The insufficiency of every other source even the heathen have deeply felt and lamented, and that the more strongly in proportion to their desire for truth and their anxious seeking after it. Let me only recall the beautiful and well-known passage from the *Phædo* of Plato. After Plato has represented Socrates as setting forth the various reasons for maintaining that there is a life hereafter with true happiness for the really pious, he makes one of the friends conversing with Socrates utter the following closing remark, showing us in a peculiarly striking manner the result at which the best minds of heathendom have arrived after having exerted their powers to the utmost to penetrate through the darkness without the light of revelation. Simmias says: "It appears to me, as probably it also does to you, Socrates, that so far as these things are concerned, it is impossible to be quite certain about them in this present life. And yet I should deem him a very weak man who did not test what is said about them to the uttermost, or whose heart failed him before he had examined them on every side. For he should persevere until he has ascertained one of two things: either he should discover or learn the truth about them, or, if that is impossible, at anyrate take the best and least refutable human doctrine, and on this

craft risk the passage through life,—unless it were possible to make the journey more safely and with less risk, on a more trustworthy craft, a *divine doctrine*."

It is this very "divine doctrine" which Christians, in the Holy Scriptures, possess. And so, too, it is to God's Word that all Christian authors who have taken up the subject have applied for light and guidance. But the Word of God is a strange book. It has with reason been said that the Bible is the book in which everyone seeks for his own views—and in which everyone finds his own views. Consequently our first rule for the employment of Scripture in connection with our present subject is to go to it in order to learn what it actually declares, and not to read our own views into it. This rule may seem simple enough, and of course it holds good of all employment of Scripture, but the observance of it in a special degree is necessary in questions like the present. And yet we sin against it oftener than we have any suspicion of. We do it in two ways; for sometimes we bring out of the words of a text what does not lie in the text, and sometimes we seek to explain away what the text actually says, just because it does not agree with some old system which has attained such a venerable age that we suspect in any divergence from it a breach of orthodoxy. The former is the ordinary error of sectarians and mystics, and it leads them often enough into the wildest of fancies which are then given forth as the teaching of Scripture. The latter error is not unknown among bigoted, excessively "orthodox" Churchmen, who, for example, consider it to be their duty to "expound spiritually," that is, to explain away, by spiritualising too much what Scripture says about "Antichrist," "the first resurrection," and "the thousand years' kingdom," because many orthodox Fathers have done the same; and to entertain the opposite opinion would bring orthodoxy into danger. But both errors are equally to be avoided; for in both cases they have set aside the apostolic injunction not to go beyond what is written.

Now it is of special importance to us here, when we are anxious to learn what the Scripture teaches about the last things, to pay attention to the progressive development

of revelation. God has not in His Word revealed everything at once, rather, on the contrary, does He little by little lift the veil from the secrets of His kingdom, exactly in proportion as the history of His kingdom takes a step forward. And the nearer we approach to the end the more does He reveal of the things pertaining to the end. Consequently there would be sad confusion if one expected in the first book of the Bible (or let us say—in its first prophetic book) to be able to find just as complete a revelation about these things as in the last. Now there is here, in the first place, a considerable difference between the two Testaments; for much of that which only meets us as faint conjecture in the Old Testament, in the New lies openly and clearly revealed. But even within each of the Testaments this gradual progress of revelation may be traced. One of the very last Old Testament prophets, Daniel, sees so far as to the dawn of the resurrection (Dan. xii. 2, 3), and the last New Testament seer, the author of the Book of Revelation, was permitted to look right into the new Jerusalem.

Moreover, we must carefully distinguish between what is said in plain language, in clear, direct statement, and what we find clothed in images, the form in which we receive large sections of the Old Testament prophecies and the most of the Revelation of the Apostle John. In the latter case we must advance with far greater caution and, as it were, wrest the contents from their wrappings of imagery. Besides, there is, especially as regards the Old Testament prophets, another point of great importance requiring attention, namely, the peculiarity of the prophetic view, or what has been called the prophetic perspective. The prophet was carried in spirit up to a spiritual eminence, a lofty mountain, from which he obtained a wide prospect over the distant future. But that glimpse came, in a certain respect, to resemble the view we always get from such a coign of vantage. We see a long distance, and we see one mountain rising beyond another,—but we do not see the intermediate valleys and plains; for the nearer mountain seems to the eye to run into the mountain lying behind it, even if there be in reality a great space between them. And so it is in the visions and pre-

dictions of the prophets. As a matter of fact there are two such lofty mountains which to their eyes generally run into each other; the first advent of Christ, His coming in the body, and the second advent, His coming at the Judgment. Both of these appear to them as the "end of days," an expression which in their language indicates the Messianic Age looked at as a whole. We can easily test this if we read carefully such passages as the second chapter of Joel. There the prophet predicts the time when the sons and daughters of Israel would prophesy. But immediately thereafter he goes on to say: "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel ii. 30, 31). You see that the prophet here at one step passes over the whole interval between Pentecost and the Last Day. The coming of the Lord in the spirit (outpouring of the Spirit) and His coming at the Judgment flow together into one picture. And so it is in numerous passages in the Prophets, indeed one might say nearly everywhere that there is mention of the "end of days," the day of the Lord, the time of the Messiah. In any case that is the rule, from which there are only few, and these generally very doubtful, exceptions.

Consequently, at this early stage, we see the improbability of finding in the Old Testament anything about such distant intermediate stages in the history of the Messiah's kingdom towards the end of time, as, *e.g.*, the thousand years' kingdom. It is very different with a book like the Revelation, whose spiritual point of view, in a great measure, is the New Testament's Last Days. As we approach the remote landscape we discover many intervening valleys and streams, although from the distant point of view we had only seen the one great mountain ridge rise beyond the other.

Moreover, we may observe that the Old Testament prophets universally speak of the New Testament Age under images borrowed from the Old Testament economy. So when they prophesy about the entry of the Gentiles into the Church, that as a rule becomes in their mouths a prediction regarding the complete supremacy of Israel over all nations.

This method of representation is a result of their mental point of view as men who stand on Old Testament ground, and therefore cannot see the New Testament kingdom of God otherwise than as a continuation of the Old Testament kingdom in glorified form, a universal kingdom with all nations united under the sceptre of Jehovah and the royal House of David. It is necessary that we should notice this; for merely by overlooking the point many have been misled into supposing that in the predictions of the prophets we have a perfectly valid warrant for the view that the Jews will one day be the leading nation within the Church, yea that they as Christians will have their Old Testament services in Jerusalem restored, although in a renewed and spiritualised form.

In the New Testament itself we have passages where that which concerns Israel in the near future, and that which concerns the whole human race and extends to the time of the end, quite run into each other. On this point we need only recall the sayings of our Lord in Matthew xxiv.—xxv., which no expositor has ever yet been able satisfactorily to explain, distinguishing what concerns the coming of the Lord for judgment over Jerusalem (at the overthrow of Jerusalem) from that which is specially applicable to His coming at the end of the world for the last judgment. The fact of the matter is that the former is to such an extent a picture of the latter—and consequently becomes a typical prediction about it—that both are combined in one picture.

In conclusion, it may not be superfluous to emphasise how necessary it is, especially when one is devoting attention to the time of the end, to avoid severing the passages of Scripture bearing on this point from their historical connection. Every expression in the Word of God must be looked at in the light of the historical situation, and in the line of thought in which it appears. If this is not observed one may often arrive at a meaning which seems to harmonize well enough with the letter of the passage, but yet which does not at all correspond with its spirit; indeed, one may even read out of it thoughts which the sacred writer himself never dreamt of.

From what has been indicated, it naturally follows that we must proceed with great caution, when we propose to search in Scripture for light on the subject which is now engaging our attention. And it also follows that we must either not at all, or only partially, use for our purpose large sections of Scripture in which it has specially been the custom to seek for enlightenment about the last times. Consequently, for the reasons stated, we cannot expect to get much guidance in the matter from the prophets. The most of what the Old Testament expresses about the state after death can essentially only have significance for us as an evidence of how these things were regarded from the standpoint at which the progressive revelation had then arrived, not as guidance in reference to the opinions we ought now to hold about these things after we have received so much fuller and clearer light in the New Testament revelation. And even in the New Testament we shall only be able to make a limited use of passages where the historical is mixed up inextricably with the eschatological, the things relating to the last times. And, finally, even much of the Revelation must practically be left out of view, partly because in it we rarely find it possible to separate the images from the facts, partly—and that chiefly—because manifestly much of the contents is not prophecy concerning events in God's kingdom, but a series of typical pictures of the struggle which will take place throughout the ages, and especially towards the end, between the kingdom of God and its opponents, the tribulations it must first undergo, and the victories it shall win; or, in other words, the thoughts appertaining to this matter are in the Revelation, so to say, dramatised,—a point which we shall take the opportunity of referring to more fully later on.

In short, if we are to arrive at any sure results at all, we must as much as possible keep essentially to the statements about these things that are set forth in the New Testament clearly and without any pictorial dress. No doubt it will be necessary, now and then (as in the doctrine about Antichrist and the thousand years' kingdom), also to trench upon the domain of the Revelation; but just in proportion also

will our results on these points be uncertain or at any rate contestable.

THE ADVANTAGES TO BE GAINED FROM INQUIRY

What advantage can be expected from a more thorough consideration of these things? Or perhaps it would serve the purpose quite as well if the question were asked: What dangers may be connected with an investigation, the result of which in so many points must of necessity still remain uncertain?

It must certainly be admitted that the matter has its dangers. For you are led so easily to forget that even that which, with the help of Scripture, you are able to apprehend about these things, has very many gaps—or rather you seek to fill up these gaps with your own conjectures, and then gradually forget that they were only conjectures, and nothing more. You form your own, often very fine, pet theories, and make yourself and others believe that they are the teachings of Scripture. You stare at the obscure figures mentioned in the Revelation, and give yourself up to calculating the date of our Lord's reappearing, forgetting the Lord's own words, that no one, not even the angels in heaven, yea not even the Son in His humiliation, knoweth the day and the hour (Mark xiii. 32). And when these calculations, with which you have been disturbing yourself and others, turn out to be mistaken, you lose faith in the very Word of God, instead of losing faith in your own power to interpret all its prophetic runes. And still further, by such idle calculations you bring some to despair and others to carelessness, as already in the age of the apostles seems to have been the case at Thessalonica (2 Thess. ii. 12); and we in recent times have had many similar examples. Moreover, the constant and one-sided consideration of these things frequently induces a busy trifling and restlessness which incapacitate you for life on earth and the tasks which God has given you to accomplish. You so hurry towards the end with all your powers of thinking, that you either quite despair of getting anything done before the Lord comes, and therefore give yourself up to

idleness—a thing which also seems to have been the case in Thessalonica (1 Thess. iv. 11); or with feverish precipitancy you lay hold now of one thing, and now of another, in order to despatch everything as quickly as possible, as when one is cramming for an examination. At other times the expectation of the near approach of the end leads you to withdraw into yourself and look upon the world, as Jonah looked on Nineveh when he sat under his gourd, and waited and prayed that judgment might immediately burst out upon the great city. And in that withdrawing of oneself there is often a good deal of spiritual arrogance. Even towards other children of God, who cannot share the same expectations, you become harsh and censorious. They do not belong to the Lord's elect, who shall share in the first resurrection, meet the Lord in the air and rule with Him in the millennial kingdom, but at the best to those who perhaps at last through much tribulation may be saved as brands from the burning. And in this spiritual arrogance fanaticism has an excellent soil. It is therefore certainly not accidental that we so often, in the Church, meet the phenomenon of fanatics specially devoting their attention to the last things.

And then it is worth noticing how often engrossment with thoughts of the future tends to degenerate into a kind of passion, as in the case of the Adventists and Irvingites. They can hardly speak about anything else. The faith working in love is so forced back by hope, that it is practically dead and buried. And yet hope is the child of faith and love. One does not act in the spirit of that child when he seeks to expel both its parents from Christianity in order that it may become the heir of both.

But, since the danger of one-sidedness and misunderstanding is so great, do we not act best if we altogether refuse to meddle with the Christian hope?

Well, so some have thought; and it is quite possible that this opinion has to a certain extent influenced our Christian preaching. This, however, would really be to "throw the baby away with the bath-water," abolish the use because of the abuse; and we have no right to do that. It is true that fiery and enthusiastic people sometimes commit blunders and

do silly things; but we are not at liberty on that account to anathematize enthusiasm, without which no great work is done, and without which life becomes dull and colourless. We have no right to split up the holy family—Faith, Hope, and Love. They must be allowed to dwell together. It is only necessary that each of them should be allowed to possess what belongs to it, and that none be neglected to the advantage of the others. God Himself in His Holy Word has placed them together (1 Cor. xiii. 13), and “what God hath joined together let not man put asunder.”

Besides, if we have a living faith, we cannot help devoting attention to the future in which the salvation we possess in faith is to find its completion. It is absolutely necessary for us to do so.

And if it is done in the proper way, even the dangers we have previously indicated may be avoided; for they do not at all necessarily follow from the nature of hope, and so they cannot be any necessary result of a thorough consideration of the doctrine of Scripture concerning that hope. If we can only learn to be sober and modest, and not overstep what is written, not lose ourselves in fanciful calculations, not proclaim conjectures to be certain truths, not uncharitably judge those who cannot accept our conjectures as a revelation from above, not for the sake of hope forget faith and love, or the work of love and the patience of faith which the Lord demands of His followers, then certainly the bestowing of our attention on hope will be no snare at all; on the contrary, we shall have a rich blessing from it, and that in many ways. The glance forward and upward will help us to tear our hearts away from the low mounds of earth and direct our minds and thoughts constantly to the place where our true treasure, our eternal inheritance, is. And if we are the real children of our Heavenly Father, that must necessarily be the case with us. A child who truly loves his native land, his home, his father's house, can never forget it, never cease thinking of it, however long he may wander as a pilgrim in a foreign land; and “our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. iii. 20 R.V.).

And instead of that heaven-directed glance of hope making us impatient, it will rather give us courage to endure

both the outward tribulations and the inner struggles against all the enemies of our souls; for in hope we have the conqueror of all enemies; in it we see the issue of all conflicts. And the one who is certain that he is to conquer will be able to hold out in the struggle till the victory is won, and to bear courageously the heat and burden of the day, as he looks away in hope to the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God. He is just the one, unmurmuringly and uncomplainingly, to wear himself out with work, since he knows that he has a whole eternity in which to rest. A few tears, more or less, he does not count so very carefully, as he looks forward to the future when God shall wipe away all tears from his eyes (Rev. vii. 17 and xxi. 4). And so we see that God's Word makes good the exhortation to constancy and perseverance by pointing to the Christian's glorious hope. (See, *e.g.*, 2 Cor. iii. 12; Rom. viii. 25; 1 Thess. i. 3.)

But this patience is not linked with the self-assurance of spiritual arrogance. The very reverse, as we have previously seen. With hope we find fear blending; for the glance towards the future shows us that between us and the fulfilment of our hope there may lie multifarious dangers and snares. That is well fitted to make us wary and cautious, and above all, watchful unto prayer.

In fine, every glance of hope at the glory behind the veil will attune the soul, even here on earth, to the praise and glory of the Lord, which shall be continued in heaven to all eternity.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH AT DIFFERENT TIMES

In conclusion, we must dwell for a moment on the question—What attitude has the Church of God throughout the ages adopted towards the discussion of the things which pertain to the life beyond the grave and the future of God's kingdom on earth and in heaven?

The attitude it has taken up has been very different at different times.

In the first Christian Churches the thoughts of believers were constantly occupied with these things, and Christians

generally seem to have expected the Lord's second coming very soon, and they cordially longed for it, yea, even hoped to see it. At any rate, this latter was the case with multitudes of Christians during the first three centuries, although it is doubtful whether we are entitled, as some have supposed, to say that it was also the case with the apostles themselves.

This living interest in the last things—this hearty desire for and expectation of the Lord's early return—was no doubt chiefly based upon their cordial affection for the Saviour and their longing to go home to Him. So far this was quite natural. But over and above this longing for heaven there were other considerations. The hardships during the persecutions became constantly more rigorous. It was so natural for them then to desire to escape from these—possibly even to see God's righteous judgments overtaking the cruel persecutors. Besides, some time elapsed before it occurred to the majority of Christians how great a task they had still to perform in this world for God's kingdom which was intended to include all nations. They consequently thought mostly about their own salvation, and were therefore inclined to leap over future developments and wish that the little flock might at once be brought home and the judgment held. And we have no reason to be surprised at that. The Church was still in its childhood, and, after the fashion of the newly converted in our own day, it suffered from the impatient longing to have its desires realized which is so characteristic of the early stages of ordinary childhood. The proper thing—which God alone through a long life in faith, and not by sight, can teach us—is to have patience, yet without losing the fire and warmth of love.

In these early centuries the doctrine of the thousand years' kingdom was practically universally held as the teaching of the orthodox Church; but it was, unfortunately, regarded by some in such a sensual way as was calculated soon to cause the doctrine to be utterly discredited by the more thoughtful. Yet it was chiefly among the Alexandrians (Origen and his disciples), who wished to interpret everything "spiritually" (*i.e.* allegorically), that it met distinct opposition, which was doubtless essentially due (apart from their general

method of interpretation) to the fact that, in the latter half of the second century, the heretic sect, the Montanists, who devoted a great deal of attention to the doctrine of the last things, zealously and one-sidedly defended the doctrine of the thousand years' kingdom, and thereby helped to make it an object of suspicion, particularly among the Alexandrians, but also among many others.

The condition of things, however, changed very much when the Church, early in the fourth century, became the State Church. Now it had found a home on earth and felt itself secure here. Tribulations and persecutions had ceased; it had secured a position of authority in the world, and began to adapt itself accordingly—adapt itself for a long life here below. No longer had it such an ardent aspiration after the life to come, and the gaze that had been turned to heaven sank towards the earth. Consequently, it cannot really surprise us to find that, during the whole period of the Middle Ages, Christians troubled themselves very little about the last things, if we except the caricature we find in the doctrine of purgatory which developed itself at that time. That doctrine was of some use even in this life; for, since it extended the authority of the Church right into the next world, it helped also to strengthen its influence over mortals on the earth; and since it gave rise to the whole pernicious teaching about masses for the soul and indulgences, it increased the power of the clergy, and brought clinking coin into the Church's coffers.

Consequently, during the Middle Ages it was practically the sects alone that occupied themselves with the Christian doctrine of hope. But, since these were in conflict with the dominant Church, and moreover, often treated the subject in a one-sided manner, and rioted about in all kinds of extravagant conceits, this helped even more, of course, to make the whole inquiry suspicious in the eyes of the Church.

This was the position of matters when the Reformation placed the lamp of God's Word upon the stand once more. The Reformers, and above all, Luther himself, wrote very finely about the life everlasting, and it was due to the Reformation that the Church at least got an opportunity of

considering these things in the light of God's Word ; for now to the last three Sundays in the Church year were assigned texts which reminded of the future life. However, the Reformers did not succeed in doing very much for the doctrine of the time of the end. Besides, they were too much occupied with developing the great fundamental truths which in the course of centuries had become overgrown with errors, especially the doctrine of justification by faith. It was mainly faith that occupied their attention, to such a degree that there was not much time and strength left for the development of that which pertained to hope. Added to this, they were probably alarmed by the sad fact that the devoting of attention to this subject, in the past, had been the business of the sects, and that, even in the very age of the Reformation, fanatical spirits had laid hold of the doctrine of hope and discoursed upon it in their own fanciful way.

After the Reformation, in the seventeenth century, the flowering age of Lutheran orthodoxy and its confession, the doctrine of the last things was likewise neglected. Men like Johan Gerhard no doubt devoted some attention to it in their dogmatic works, yet it was only, as it were, in a supplementary fashion ; but it did not amount to any full and impartial development of these doctrinal points in their proper connection.

In the succeeding period, the age of Pietism, more attention certainly began to be bestowed upon the last things. The pious Spener, who had such an open eye for the sad state of spiritual death prevailing in his age, dwelt fondly on the prophecies of Scripture about the future. But when he ventured to express a modest "hope for better things" in the days to come, that was at once proclaimed by his orthodox opponents to be a "fine Chiliasm" (doctrine of the millennial kingdom), and condemned as a dangerous heresy. They likewise took advantage of a sentence in the Augsburg Confession (Art. 17) in which there is pronounced a judgment of damnation (*i.e.* rejection as heretical doctrine) against all anabaptists and other fanatics who taught "that the pious should obtain the mastery over the world, after the ungodly everywhere were suppressed," a judgment which

certainly was never meant to be applied to a view like Spener's, but was chiefly intended for such people as the fanatics in Münster, and such as held the coarsely sensual Chiliasm.

And since Spener in other respects was a thorn in the side of the "orthodox," and in many ways was suspected of heresy by these blind zealots, the very fact that he earnestly devoted himself to the study of the doctrine of the last things became a new reason for regarding every attempt in this direction with suspicion. And it was still worse when his friend, Superintendent Petersen of Lüneberg (*ob.* 1727), and his wife Eleonora, went much further than he, and were really led astray into fanciful fanaticism. Joh. Alb. Bengel (*ob.* 1752) next took up these studies, and carried them further than any of his predecessors; but it was unfortunate that this man of God, with the pious mind and the penetrating eye, whose exposition of the New Testament even to this day in many respects is unsurpassed, was induced to enter upon calculations which led him to fix the beginning of the millennial kingdom for 1836. Here he overstepped the line, and consequently brought discredit on his other attempts to throw light upon the future.

Then came the age of Rationalism, in the latter half of last century and the beginning of the nineteenth, and, of course, it had no taste for these things. The only relative matter which it troubled itself about was the immortality of the soul, whilst it threw everything else, even the hope of resurrection, overboard.

With the reawakening of religious life after the winter sleep of Rationalism, *i.e.* from about 1825 or a little later, has, for the first time, any very serious attempt been made to find out the evidence of Scripture regarding the last things; and that much more thoroughly and impartially than ever before. Formerly, mainly single points had occupied men's attention. They had written books about death, or resurrection, or the millennial kingdom, or the judgment, or eternal life and eternal death. But connected accounts of everything relating to the time of the end, both as concerns the individual and the Church, belong almost wholly to the last half-century. And during this period probably more has

been written and spoken on the subject than during all the previous centuries combined. Every age has its task. The old Greek Church developed chiefly the doctrine about God and the Trinity, the old Roman Church the doctrine about man and sin, the Reformation the doctrine of salvation. It seems to be reserved for our age thoroughly to unfold the doctrine about the Church, both the militant and the triumphant, and in connection therewith also the destiny of the individual after the end of this earthly life. No doubt much of what has been contributed in this domain is unfortunately rather vague and untenable, yea, often enough merely fanciful conceits which can only create confusion. But there is also much which offers valuable contributions towards the clearing up of the obscure. May the Church now understand her task here, and not leave the field to the Irvingites and Adventists, and other enthusiasts! We have already had occasion to observe that the greater the tribulation and the heavier the trouble which have existed in the Church, the more have Christians turned their attention to the prophecies which speak about the end of all tribulation both for the individual believer and for the whole Church. Now we are living in just such an age, and so it is also an age of hope and expectation. Unbelief becomes constantly more audacious, and the antichristian forces stand out on the horizon with ever increasing distinctness. Consequently it is also necessary to keep the banner of hope unfurled—not with the impatience which cannot abide the Lord's own time; not with the curiosity which wants to know everything, even that which the Lord has wished to conceal from us; not with the self-conceit which will calculate dates and hours, where the mouth of truth has declared that that is impossible; but with the longing of the bride for heaven, expressed in the words: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 7–20), also adding to that wish the Master's reservation: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," and in that mood waits with patience until the "hour of deliverance rings."

I

THE FUTURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL, FROM AND INCLUDING DEATH, UNTIL CHRIST'S FINAL ADVENT

A.—DEATH

WE purpose, in the pages that follow, first, to glance at death as a historic and prehistoric fact; next, to examine its physical character, then to seek an explanation of its real cause and consequent nature, and finally, to consider its most obvious results, both as a curse and as a blessing.

There is nothing which man likes less to think upon than death, and yet there is nothing more certain than death. We may become rich or we may become poor, we may rise to honour and regard, or we may end our days in disgrace and infamy—all that is uncertain; but that we shall die is not a matter of any doubt. The date may be indefinite, yet only within narrow limits. Before a century has passed we shall all be in the dust. The average life of man is not much more than thirty years, and of every four human beings born one dies before even the seventh year is reached. Every year some thirty million mortals die, every day eighty or ninety thousand, every hour three or four thousand; or, in other words, for every throb of the pulse a heart ceases to beat.

And there is nothing that can check this devastating march of death. Undoubtedly our age displays great acuteness in tracing out the various causes of death, and deserves all credit for doing so. But even if much more

success should attend such investigations than has been the case hitherto, yet we should not be any nearer the abolishing of death. Often life simply expires; the debility of age is followed by death without any actual disease manifesting itself. It is like a lamp which must expire because the oil is all consumed. Life must cease, because the vital force has all been used up. There the matter must rest with the old saying, "the garden grows no herb to cure the malady of death" (*Contra malum mortis, Non est medicamen in hortis*).

But it is not only in the world of humanity that death celebrates its triumphs. No; in the animal and vegetable kingdoms around us we likewise everywhere trace its well-nigh unbounded power. By its influence the separate individuals are transformed into mere infinitesimal links in the life of the race. All are born but to die.

And if we turn back our glance to the story of creation, there, too, we discover death working through all ages and races. The most ancient annals of the human race begin with whole chapters where the constant refrain is: "He died" (*e.g.*, Gen. v.), and on all creation death has carved his runes. The various countries are full of burial grounds and battle-fields, and the globe itself is one great necropolis, where countless millions of dead men, animals, and plants are evidence that death has ruled despotically over our poor earth. Among many creatures (*e.g.*, several classes of animalculæ and various kinds of insects) the duration of life is so extremely short that it looks as if death were not merely the end of their life, but its only end, its ultimate aim.

But that is not all. Even further back than any history extends, death has wielded his sceptre. On the earth, through the epochs that have preceded all history, yea, preceded man's appearance on the earth, death has reigned for thousands of years. Not merely single individuals, but whole races of plants and animals have died, and new species walk over their graves.

The whole earth may be compared to those enormous coral reefs in the South Seas, where only in the upper layers

living animals are found, whilst the lower layers consist of dead bodies. Whole towns are built on dead animalculæ from earlier ages. And just as there are many traces of death even in prehistoric days, so are there also signs of the effects of disorder in ancient petrified skeletons. And amongst the classes of animals which have died out long ago, we find many whose teeth and whose whole structure show that they were beasts of prey, and consequently, must have sought their support by the death of other animals, relics of which also have been found in their petrified excrements.

We have therefore good warrant for saying that death has prevailed in the world, not merely through all the ages of history, but even long before all history.

But then there meets us this extremely strange fact, that, although we have been made to feel so forcibly the power of death in all ages and in every domain, yet there is none of us who is able to satisfactorily explain what death really is. What is death? That is an old but yet still unanswered query! No doubt the answer has been given, that death is the cessation of life. That is quite true, but you must not suppose that you have explained anything by such an answer; for what then is life, the cessation of which is death? The misfortune is that we cannot explain death, just because we are unable to explain life. Many desperate attempts at explanation have been made, but none has been completely satisfactory. Either the explanation has said little or nothing, or it has been so involved as to require explanation itself. The latter is true of the well-known definition of Spencer, that "Life is the definite combination of heterogeneous change, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external co-existences and sequences." But who can gather any meaning from that?

Simpler, and probably more approximately correct, is it to say that life is that force in an organism which places all other forces working in it in serviceable relation to its growth and preservation. The ordinary forces of nature—physical, chemical—are always active in each body, receiving and throwing off, combining and dissolving. But so long as the life force is present they must all serve the organism,

do what may be beneficial to it. The articles of food are absorbed and dissolved, used up, and the injurious particles ejected; the whole body is renewed every few years, and is yet the old body, since life governs the forces so that they always work after the same pattern, produce the same body, and thus preserve the body's identity during all the exchange of its particles and alteration of matter. Life is, as it were, the unity in all the working forces in our bodies, which leads them to seek a common object, the building up and preservation of the body. It is life that causes the current of fluids in the many million cells in our body to move just as they do, and causes them all to work in harmonious co-operation for the good of the whole body. Take this unity away and the working forces fall asunder,—dissolution and decomposition set in as an evidence that death has taken the place of life.

Of course, we have not thus given any explanation of what life really is,—for that we cannot do,—but have only indicated how it works, what function it has in relation to the other forces working in the body.

And just as we are unable to explain life, so we are unable to point out its origin. There was a day when natural science boasted of being able to create life from lifeless matter. That day is past. After the careful investigations of recent years, it has come to the conviction that what it had taught previously about a so-called *abiogenesis* (that life can spring from the lifeless) was based on a misunderstanding. All life in the present day derives its origin from something which itself has life, consequently we know nothing at all about the origin of life, and so it is not to be wondered at that we cannot comprehend its end, which we call death.

In a certain sense, life and death very frequently go side by side for a long period in the same organism before death obtains the mastery over life. In the tree, *e.g.*, the inner and older parts die whilst the outer and younger are still in full vigour; and both in plants and animals life is constantly perishing as the old cells die and new ones are formed. The whole life of the organism depends on whether the life process can hold its own against the death process.

The inexplicable vital force has often a wonderful tenacity both in plants and animals, and that frequently in a higher degree the lower they stand. Frogs can be frozen stiff, even remain without air for months, and without food for years, without dying; while animalculæ can lie dried up for long periods, and yet come to life again when they are moistened. Many microscopical plants and animals can endure a heat which greatly exceeds the boiling-point, without being destroyed. Some lung-breathing fish can lie capsuled in a lump of earth for months without losing life. In many animals, as is well known, animal functions half cease during a long winter sleep, but yet death does not ensue. Still, all these are trivial compared with the grains of wheat from Egyptian graves which retain their germinating power even after an interval of three or four thousand years. And this power of germinating is just the plant's life. That shows strikingly how tenacious vital force can be.

As soon as the vital force ceases to operate, dissolution sets in. If there is no longer something which like a governing hand keeps together all the forces working in an organism, and compels them to co-operate for a common purpose,—the building up and preserving of the organism according to the pattern given in its idea,—then these same forces work no longer in building up, but in tearing down, decomposing; in other words, death is accompanied by dissolution and decay.

Now, why does this change in the organism take place? Why does the governing force, which we call life, disappear, and therewith the condition that the physical and chemical forces of the organism can work in full harmony with each other and steadily preserve the balance between what the organism in the course of its nutritive assimilation receives and what it rejects? In other words, why is it necessary for death to supervene?

In truth, it is not such an easy matter to answer the question; but yet it seems as if one might say that there is no manifest reason in nature itself why death should ever supervene. Even in this respect death is not natural, but unnatural. Of course, it is not sufficient to say that the

vital force becomes used up and then death must naturally put in an appearance; for it is just the characteristic of nutrition and assimilation that what is used up is being constantly replaced, and if you are always providing the lamp with oil and wick, you cannot see why it should be impossible to keep it burning for many thousands of years, yea for ever, so long as there is no lack of material for this constant replacing of the substance used up. Even an engine does not stop so long as the driving power continues to work without diminution and no wheel goes to pieces. Since, nevertheless, death is always seen to come, after a longer or a shorter period, to every living being in the world, then there must certainly have come in something new to disturb the natural order of things; for by a harmonious co-operation of all the powers and forces in an organism, its dissolution cannot possibly take place in a purely natural manner. In other words, death is not a natural, but an unnatural process.

To this result we come with still greater certainty when we regard more closely the method in which death works in the world, and the creature's idea of it, terror of it, and struggle against it.

If death had been a painless dissolution, then one might reluctantly have reconciled himself to the thought that it belonged to the "order of nature," was a link in the chain of nature. True, natural processes in a healthy individual, such as eating, drinking, breathing, are as a rule painless, if not actually connected with comfort. But is it so with death? No, it is the very opposite. It is, indeed, as we all know, often an extremely painful, violent severance, during which the individual groans and writhes, so that the features are contorted and the form altered, and frequently before the end comes he resembles only a skeleton.

Most of all is death felt to be contrary to nature where it appears as a direct result of man's moral relation, as by murder, by execution, by those slaughters on a large scale to which our battlefields have been witnesses through thousands of years. Yet not only here, but also in the "struggle for existence" which, especially in our age, becomes

in so many ways a cause of death to thousands, yea millions, we must see a glaring unnaturalness, a breach of the harmony of creation, an incontrovertible evidence that something must have come in here which did not pertain to the creation from the beginning.

And it is not only in the human world that we meet death as the violent and painful disintegration of God's creation, for the same holds good of the brute kingdom. Here, too, pain and disease are the constant companions of death, here rages the "struggle for existence," and that universally with the result that the death of one is the life of another, and *vice versâ*. Indeed, here the struggle becomes much more severe and horrible, because there is no moral force to check and place limits to it, such as is found in human society. Here truly is a great death struggle, where large and small beasts of prey spread death and destruction around, until they themselves in turn frequently become the victims of other larger and more powerful animals. Who can conceive or describe all the pain of death which in this way is called forth in every region? Earth and air are full of it, and the sea is crowded with it. And even among the innumerable millions of animalculæ invisible to the naked eye, a similar struggle is taking place. And it is not always merely in order to procure food that the one animal slays the other; for not rarely the deaths occasioned by the beasts of prey are accompanied by tortures of exquisite cruelty, as in the case of the shrike family, or of the cat, which tortures the mouse before killing it. Now, all this gives us the impression, not of a natural process, but of a disturbance, a struggle of all against all. It does not seem a worthy expression of the Creator who is the God of Love, but appears to be rather an embodiment of the hatred which can only have its origin from His direct opposite—the Devil.

Even in another sense is the struggle for existence a proof of the unnaturalness of death. It is of course a fight for life, and therefore a fight against death. And it is quite certain that in every living thing there is a natural love of life and a dread of death.

It is, at any rate, as a rule, only a few affected philosophers (as, for example, Feuerbach) who have been able to work themselves up to be so unnatural as to sing hymns in praise of death. Usually, as we have indicated, there is everywhere a more or less strong attachment to life and fear of death, which stands to the consciousness as something so terrible that this terror can only be explained by supposing that death is an element opposed to nature, and on that very account nature is afraid of it, and struggles with all its might to defend itself against it. Death is the "King of Terrors."

And this dread of death, as being contrary to nature, we find even in Him who represents human nature in its purity, the Lord Jesus Christ. He faltered at the thought of His own death; He wept at the grave of Lazarus; indeed, it is even said of Him that, when He approached His dead friend's grave, He groaned in spirit and was greatly agitated, which can only be explained by His regarding death as unnatural, as being an enemy of the creature.

This does not at all conflict with the fact that the pious man now can look forward to death with joy; death certainly appears to him as an enemy, but his joy is due to the consciousness that this enemy is the last (1 Cor. xv. 26).

Even in relation to the lifeless body, mankind shows a horror of death, as of a strange, hostile element. In different lands and among different races there is not only a certain repugnance to corpses, but in many places these are regarded as things which in themselves both are unclean and cause uncleanness in all men and things that come into contact with them. Among the Jews, this way of looking at death received a divine sanction in the Mosaic law, which declared that a dead body made not only the one who touched it, but the whole house in which it lay, and all the persons who lived there or came therein, unclean, and that for seven days (Num. xix. 11 *et seq.*).

Indeed, it even seems as if all other causes of Levitical uncleanness bore some relation to death and were derived from it. Sin makes unclean; and the wages of sin (and therefore also its symbol), is death and corruption; and only in consequence of their connection with, or likeness to, death

and corruption do other things (*e.g.* leprosy) become also regarded as unclean and contaminating.

Into the views of the different heathen races on this point we cannot of course here enter in detail ; but it is a fact that, amongst the best known peoples, death and decay are regarded as things so unclean that they contaminate even by mere contiguity, not to speak of contact ; and the same view was commonly held by the cultured nations of antiquity. Amongst the Hindus this was so very strong that they knew no more gruesome image of the horrible than the embracing of a dead man in a dark room ; whilst amongst the Greeks and Romans also, death was regarded as a contaminating thing.

Does not all this afford evidence that death has stood, and still stands, to the consciousness of mankind, not as a natural transition link in its development, but as something evil, which is not to be traced to the author of human nature, but to its enemy, a secret power of darkness ?

Nor in the animal world, nor in nature as a whole, can death have been the original condition, as we have already indicated ; for death certainly implies corruption, and this corruption, the Word of God says, is a bondage under which creation groans, a yoke which is laid upon its neck, "not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it," a curse which is heavy indeed, but yet from which it hopes one day to be set free, when it shall be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And since even the irrational creation groans under corruption (death and what follows it) as under the tyranny of a hostile power, how much more must not this be true of man ? Yea verily, even "we ourselves groan within ourselves" (Rom. viii. 19-25).

But here, undoubtedly, we must be prepared to meet an objection.

If death were not a physical necessity for creation, then, it may be said, of course all men and animals that ever have been born into the world might still be living on the earth. But how would our earth be able to contain all the beings resulting from the constant births without any deaths ? It would seem as if death, for this very reason, must be regarded as a direct physical necessity.

This objection, however, is so far from being decisive, that many answers can be given to it.

In the first place, there is no reason why God might not have interrupted the earthly development as soon as the earth had become full enough of living creatures; for its goal might then be regarded as having been reached. As concerns man in particular, the injunction ran thus: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." In the next place there is no necessity that all the individuals resulting from this increase should always remain on this earth, and in an unchanged condition. Indeed, it is certainly most probable that there would one day have occurred a transformation corresponding to the change which is to be effected in those who live to see the advent of the Lord, and corresponding to the transformation of nature which will then take place. That would certainly have been a quiet, painless transformation, like the development of the egg into the bird, or of the larva into the butterfly. That would not have been death, but beatification, since all disease and pain would have been excluded, and therewith also everything contrary to nature.

And if the creature, thus transformed, were still to inhabit this earth, which would also have been transformed into something more beautiful and glorious than it was even at the beginning of creation, there would certainly be no suggestion of lack of space, for none of us knows what space a transformed creature will require, and certainly that would not have offered any greater difficulties to the mind than the new heaven and the new earth, which will one day become the abode to all eternity both of transformed mortals and transformed creatures, and will therefore be able to contain them all.

And then, if we turn to God's Holy Word, and ask what it has to say about the origin of death, we are enabled to understand whence this strange element in creation sprang. And not that alone, but it likewise becomes clear to us, both *why* death came, and that it *must have* come; in other words, that it is such a natural consequence of man's changed relation to God, on account of his sins, that it would

have been inconceivable if sin had not produced just such a result. Practically then, death, contrary as it is to the real nature of the creature, is yet a very natural breach of nature.

It is here, then, we must both seek and find the solution of the riddle of death.

We have already seen that life is the unity that holds together all the other forces working in an organism, and that nowhere on earth has been discovered the fountain from which that life has sprung, since all life on the earth already presupposes something living from which it takes its origin. And so it is natural to inquire: where is the fountain of life to be sought? Is there not some primal life from which all other life springs? Is there no higher unity which holds together and governs all these living organisms, with all the forces working in them, in such a manner that they must all work in mutual harmony, and for the good of the whole? Just as every cause through a long series of contingent causes points back to a first and absolute cause, so must there also be an absolute life, which does not owe its origin to any other life, but, on the other hand, is itself the fountain of all life. Where is it to be sought?

Scripture, which here, as usual, shows itself to be the best philosopher, gives us a short answer to the question when it refers to God as the absolute life, which is the fountain of life to all that lives. He is the living God (Heb. iii. 12), the one who alone owes His life to Himself, or, as the Scripture puts it, "hath life in Himself" (John v. 26). Every other living thing gets its life from Him, "seeing He giveth to all life, and breath" (Acts xvii. 25). So also the sweet singer of Israel says to Him: "With Thee is the fountain of life" (Ps. xxxvi. 9). And for that very reason He is designated also as the one who "only hath immortality" (1. Tim. vi. 16): for all other living things have their life only as a loan from Him, and He can take it from them again whenever He pleases. Just as it is He who has given life, so He is the one who has the right to take it back. Therefore it is also said of Him: "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (Ps. civ. 29).

However, this must not be interpreted in the merely superficial sense that God, as it were, placed a portion of the forces of life in creation and then left it to itself. When He is called the fountain of life, there is certainly an altogether different way of regarding it, and one which is the true reason for such a designation. The water of the brook has not merely once flowed from the fountain-head, but it flows perpetually out; and if the water no longer wells forth from the fountain, the brook is soon dried up. So also with the life of created beings in their relation to God as the fountain-head of life. Their severance from Him must therefore necessarily have death as a result after a longer or shorter period. No doubt, for a little while some water may be found trickling in the lower reaches of the brook, even after the fountain is stopped up; but as a matter of fact it is only a question of time when the last drop will be dried up,—so is it also with the creature whose relation to God has been broken off.

But here it must not be overlooked, that it was not the whole creation which stood in a direct relation to God, but only man, who bears the likeness of God, and therefore was appointed as His vicegerent on the earth, and set to have “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth,” in short, over all that lives (Gen. i. 28). God is a personal Spirit, and can therefore only enter into close relation to a personal spirit like that of man who is of His kindred, made in His image, and bearing His likeness. With this spirit of man the Lord entered into the most living connection, filled it with life of His life, and made man on that very account to be an intermediary between Him and the rest of creation. In virtue of this connection, man’s spirit became able to rule over his whole soul-life with all its instincts, powers, and forces, and over the body which is the abode of the soul. In this spirit the whole man had his centre of gravity, round which everything revolved, the unity which held the whole man together, and caused all his powers and forces to co-operate in the most beautiful harmony. So long as the spirit was in such living communion with God, occupied such a

governing, leading, all-dominating position in man, there was no room for death; for that is just dissolution, and such a dissolution presupposes that already there has arisen an inner discord amongst the various forces in the organism.

But just as the spirit, in virtue of its relation to God, dominated the whole man, and thereby assured man's unity and inner harmony, so again, man dominated the whole of nature, and was a guarantee that in it also there would be peace and concord. And when it is said that all the beasts of the field were brought to man in order to receive their names (Gen. ii. 19), we are thereby taught that in one sense they were regarded as man's domestic animals, and that they had their significance from their relation to man, and were subject to him. So long as man held this position of dominion over them, and obedience to man was an element of their nature, the unity and harmony we have found in man, in virtue of his relation to God, was bound also to exercise its influence on the animal world. It is inconceivable that under such circumstances there should be deeds of violence and murder among the creatures living under man's peaceful dominion. It is only when the government is deposed, or unable to attend to its functions, that the lawlessness sets in whereby one seeks the life of another. So long as man, still sinless, sat upon his throne in the world, the same rule held good in nature as will hold good when sin has been eradicated: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isa. lxv. 25; *vide* also xi. 6). "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there" (Isa. xxxv. 9).

And just as little as the organisms, under such relations, could be conceived as entering into mutual conflicts, just so little can we imagine the instincts of the different organisms, and the forces of nature working in them, conflicting in their mutual relation to each other. Here, too, mutual harmony must have existed, so long as everything was as it should be. Where, then, would there be any place for death?

But the whole situation became suddenly changed when

the lord of creation, man, rebelled against his God and transgressed His commands. When the spirit of man broke away from God, it lost, with its likeness to God, its supremacy in man, and thereby lost also its supremacy in nature. At the moment the spirit of man rose in rebellion against God, the instincts rose in rebellion against it. Without connection with God it was unable to rule over itself, and still less to rule over the whole soul-life whose lord it ought to be. From thenceforth it became a playground for wanton, sin-smitten desires. From thenceforth discord and dissolution entered into human nature; there was nothing now to hold the soul-life together. The one instinct draws in one direction, and the other in another; but all away from God, who is the origin and fountain of life. Under this mutual conflict of theirs they wear out the forces of the body, since it becomes like a house in which there are constant brawls. Such a house cannot become old; it will soon be in ruins. It falls under the sentence: Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. We see daily how that ascendancy of the instincts, unchecked by the spirit, destroys a human life and consumes its vital force. The ultimate result of the process is the dissolution which we call corporeal death.

But even that was not all. By becoming God's enemy, man had not only become his own, but also the enemy of the whole of nature; or rather, nature became man's enemy. When a viceroy rebels against his king, then at the same moment also all his people are set free from their obligation to obey him. If they are to be faithful to their king, so far from it being their duty to obey the rebellious viceroy any longer, it is rather their duty to become his avowed enemies, to take up arms against him and seek to put him to death. And that has become the attitude of nature to sinful man. From being his obedient servant it has become his sworn foe, whom he can only partly and with great pains again reduce to subjection. We have also involved nature with ourselves in the misery of abandonment by God, and so it is no longer content under our sway. The earth, too, has become cursed for our sake, and so it produces thorns and thistles for us (Gen. iii. 17, 18), an expression implying

that the earth has become a scourge in the hand of God for sinful humanity. And experience shows us that this is not an empty assertion. Nature waylays us everywhere, and makes us the targets of its deadly shafts. The elements rage against us, beasts of prey try to devour us, serpents vent their venom on us, noxious insects sting and plague us, myriads of invisible bacteria bring diseases on us. The whole affords a glimpse of nature in conflict with its lord, who has lost his supremacy because he has rebelled against his God. In all this we hear the echo of the grave words of warning, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Moreover, it is not merely into nature's attitude to man that there has entered a decisive change by man's fall; no, even within nature itself the position is altered. Discord and disturbance have entered in. When man lost his dominion over nature there entered into nature, too, a condition of lawlessness and disorder. When the lawful government is overthrown, anarchy usually enters in, and everyone is a law to himself and does as he likes; there arises civil war in the land, and every man's hand is against his neighbour. So it is now to a great extent in nature. Since by man's fall nature lost its point of unity, it has been rent by inner conflicts. The one animal slays the other; the one living being lives at the expense of the other, sucks its blood, and consumes its vital force. In other words, there have come dismemberment, dissolution, death, where formerly reigned harmony, unity, life. So, true it is—not merely for mankind, but for nature too—that "the wages of sin is death."

Looked at thus, the state of matters becomes something like this. Life is a harmonious co-operation of all the forces existing in an organised being. This life is in its origin and independence only to be found in God, who also is the fountain of the life of creation. Within creation, man, being the possessor of God's image, was also the bearer of life, since as the lord of creation he was both the guardian of its unity and the instrument of its connection with the fountain of life, God. When he fell, not merely his own, but also creation's connection with the fountain of life, was broken off. The spirit of man severed itself from God, and lost thereby

its dominion both over itself and over the soul's whole life and instincts; that was spiritual death. The instincts thus let loose now rend the body; and all nature, at God's behest, enters into conflict with it as with a rebel. Both partners in the union break down the forces of the body, and bring about the dissolution which we call death of the body. Nature, left to itself, without having its natural head any longer, goes the same way as man, with mutually contending impulses. Forces, elements, and organisms fight with each other in strange confusion, the result of which must necessarily be dissolution (death), first that of the individual then that of all nature,—when the very “elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Pet. iii. 10).

That, then, is the fundamental condition of creation, brought about by the Fall,—a condition of constant dissolution and extinction, which Scripture describes by the expression, “the creature was made subject to vanity” (Rom. viii. 20).

Against the idea we have been striving to set forth there has, however, been raised an objection even by orthodox theologians in recent times. They have said: This explanation of the origin of death can only hold good of man, for—as has been already indicated—there are tolerably certain traces of death in the animal world, even in the ages which seem to precede by a long interval man's own appearance on the earth, so that death in the animal world cannot be a consequence of the fall of man. Some even add that it would be inconceivable that the animals were not intended as food for men, and then, of course, they would have to die.

Now, so far as this latter reason is concerned, they seem to have overlooked the fact that in the Bible there is no report of any animal's death until after the Fall, when the Lord made Adam and Eve coats of skins to clothe them (Gen. iii. 21), and Abel offered of the firstlings of his flocks (Gen. iv. 4). In other words, only when man by sin had become aware of his nakedness (Gen. iii. 7), and therefore needed the skins of animals to clothe himself with, and when his guilt demanded an expiatory sacrifice which necessitated the shedding of blood, without which there is no remission (Heb. ix. 22), only then was there mention of an animal's

death. And even then the flesh of the animal was not given for the food of man. That was done only after the Deluge (Gen. ix. 2 *et seq.*), for in God's original ordinance about man's food there is merely mention of articles from the vegetable kingdom (Gen. i. 29). Practically, then, at least from the point of view of the biblical narrative, it is the case that only after the Fall is there any mention of death in the animal world.

It is more difficult to explain how in fossil remains of animals we find so many traces of death from a period that seems to ante-date man's appearance on the earth. However, it must be noted that this, like so much of what geology tells us, belongs to the things about which our knowledge is in its infancy. Later discoveries may perhaps eventually set many things in a very different light from what has been the case hitherto. On the whole, it is risky to venture upon the interpretation of Scripture according to the so-called results of such a new science as geology, which is still in the course of rapid development. To this it must be added, that even if eventually it should be incontrovertibly proved—as is quite possible—that death is found in the animal world even before man, then that does not show that death in creation is not in our age a result of the Fall. Of course, it is not so very easily proved that that past period falls within the six days of creation, and it is only with the creation dating from that epoch that we have here to do,—it is the dominion of death in *this* creation we have to explain.

But, in the next place, we must also maintain that, even if the aforesaid geological fossils must be referred to an earlier period than man's creation and fall, it has not thereby been proved that death in nature, away back in those far distant ages, did not owe its origin to sin, although it might not be man's sin. Since, however, nothing preceding the six days' work, under any circumstances, concerns us further here, because it lies outside of the economy of salvation of the human race to which our investigations must here be limited, we shall not enter into what believing theologians of high rank, *e.g.* Delitzsch and Kurtz, have said about a Fall in the angel-world which would have occasioned the condition of

death and confusion which seems to have prevailed in creation through thousands of years, and in the opinion of many through millions of years, before yet any human being was found upon our globe. But even if they were right in this, that would only explain the existence of death in the nature which had come to an end before man's appearance, and thus would not at all conflict with the supposition that death in nature in historic times depends upon man's Fall.

The important thing for us is really this: Is it the view of Scripture that the present dominion of death, even in nature, owes its origin to sin? To this several recent commentators have felt compelled to give a negative answer. They have—in addition to what has already been said—especially urged that Scripture does nowhere expressly declare that death in nature is also due to sin, since its utterance about death as “the wages of sin” (Rom. v. 12, vi. 23) must be understood to hold good only of death and sin in the human world.

Certainly, we dare not deny that the passages referred to, in and by themselves, admit of such an interpretation; but that is not the probable interpretation, and for these reasons:—

(a) When it is expressly said in Genesis i. 29, that man originally had only fruits and herbs provided for food, then even in this there is a hint that animal life before the Fall was inviolable. And that this is not merely a coincidence, we learn from Genesis ix. 2 *et seq.*, which shows that man at a later date first got permission to eat flesh, and therefore also to take animal life.

(b) From Genesis i. 30 it seems to follow that originally the animals themselves did not have God's permission to devour each other; for only “every green herb” was their appointed food. They were therefore all herbivorous.

This does not prove, of course, that they were immortal (for they might have been carried off by diseases, and very many diseases are due to parasites); but yet it seems to show that a very important cause of the death of millions daily, which now exists, did not then exist, namely, mutual conflict and mutual slaughter in the animal kingdom.

(c) In and by itself it would not be a matter for surprise if death, as the punishment of man for sin, also affected all nature which was created for his sake and for his service. And when it is said that the earth was cursed for man's sake, and doomed to bear thorns and thistles, it would certainly have been strange if all the living creatures, which like man were to feed on the produce of the earth, had not in a vital manner been affected by the curse.

On the whole, nature has been placed in such a relation to man that, according to God's Word, it has again and again been affected by various kinds of misfortunes on account of sin, such as failure of harvest, drought, etc. We need here only mention such passages as Deuteronomy xxviii. 17-24; Isaiah vii. 23; Jeremiah xii. 12, 13, and the account of the Egyptian plagues brought about by the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, *e.g.* the water of the Nile being turned to blood, the three days of darkness, the murrain (Ex. v.-vii.), and especially the last plague, which is very instructive on account of the close connection which seems to exist between the punishment of death on man and on beasts; for when all Egypt's first-born sons were slain by the angel of death, the same fate also befel the first-born of the cattle (Ex. xii. 29).

No doubt it was the case that that punishment befel nature not merely on account of man's sins, but also with the intention that it should reach man and be a punishment to him. And who will venture to deny that death in nature has become a punishment of man also? It has certainly contributed its considerable share to the misery under which poor mankind groans. We need only think of the many whom beasts of prey have rent asunder or who have fallen as victims to the bites of venomous snakes. If there were no death in nature, of course there could not be any beasts of prey or poisonous snakes, or other venomous animals, for their deadly activity is just as great among animals as among men.

(d) Now, on account of this connection between man and nature, it becomes difficult to conceive of man as immortal in the midst of a nature in which death already exercised dominion. Man's corporeal side is so bound up with nature

that his immortality also seems to presuppose that death had not forced its way into nature.

(e) But the most striking evidence that death in nature depends on death in the human world seems to lie in this, that according to God's Word the extinction of both shall be simultaneous, and that in such a way that the one is conditioned by the other. In any other sense it is impossible for us to understand Romans viii. 19-23. The creature was made subject to vanity, but this vanity is just mortality, and what pertains to it. When it is said that "the creature was made subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it," this certainly indicates that the condition which is first called vanity (*ματαιότης*, emptiness, hollowness, a fine appearance without corresponding reality, ver. 20) and afterwards corruption (*φθορά*, dilapidation, gradual going to ruin, mortality, ver. 21) is neither natural nor self-inflicted. This condition has been brought upon the creature by a judgment on account of another (man), and so the creature rebels against it as against something contrary to nature, as against something contrary to its idea. However, under this mortality it does not lie in despair, but waits with hope and sighing,—hope of deliverance from it, and sighing for the deliverance to come. And this hope places it in connection with the glorious liberty of the children of God (ver. 21). When that comes it expects to see its hope fulfilled. And that sighing and hoping meet with corresponding emotions in man. "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (ver. 23). When we are redeemed for ever from all corruption by sanctification, the creature itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, because sin, which is the cause of death, has been rooted out. Does not this show that even the mortality of the creature must be the result of man's sin, since it will cease along with the cessation of sin among men?

We have been trying to show that death is a natural result of sin, but that, of course, does not prevent death from likewise being a punishment for sin. It is characteristic of

the divine punishments and a proof of the divine wisdom that the punishment of sin very frequently flows naturally from the sin itself. We need only recall how the drunkard and the debauchee receive the punishment for their sin in broken health and a wasted life. But the fact that sin itself gives birth to its punishment does not prevent the punishment in another respect from being described as a divine judgment. That death is such a judgment is plainly told us where death is first mentioned (Gen. ii. 17), and the same is set forth with perfect clearness in many passages of God's Word. We need only recall such passages as the 90th Psalm, the prayer of Moses, the man of God, which describes for us how God's anger against Israel caused death to carry them away into the wilderness, which is only another expression for the condition of human life in general, since the few years man has to live are closed with a doom to which reference is made in these words: "We are consumed by Thine anger, . . . all our days are passed away in Thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three-score years and ten; . . . it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of Thine anger?"

In full accordance with this, the New Testament likewise represents death as a righteous sentence pronounced by God on sin. "The wages of sin is death." It is sin which "bringeth forth death" (Jas. i. 15). "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). "Sin hath reigned unto death" (Rom. v. 21). And because this connection between sin and death is not only a relation occasioned by the very nature of the case, but also at the same time a relation appointed by God, the apostle designates it as a "judgment" (Rom. i. 32), a "condemnation" (Rom. v. 16), and a "curse." Therefore Christ also, when He atoned for the sins of all, had to "taste death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9), "being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13), although He personally had nothing to do with the sin which in a perfectly natural way brings about death. So far as He is concerned, death can only be regarded as a judgment of God upon sin, the guilt of which He, as our substitute, bore.

It is this fact, that death is a judgment of God, an

expression of God's anger against sin, which makes it so terrible, accompanied by such dread. It is not merely the bodily pains, the death struggle, that make it so serious. These are outweighed by the thought that it is the end of the earthly life, the last conflict, a moment of decisive significance for eternity. But yet the real sting in it is the more or less clear consciousness that man then stands face to face with a distinct judgment of God upon sin. Here, too, the words of Scripture are verified, "the sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56).

Yet death is not only a curse; for after sin, along with the whole sea of moral and physical wretchedness that accompanies sin, has broken its way into human kind, death looked at from another side is even a blessing, and that in several respects.

They who only regard creation from the point of view of the naturalist are wont to raise the objection against the biblical view of death as a punishment, that it is manifest that we should be in a most unfortunate position if we had not death in nature; for death seems to be just as necessary as life. The earth in the course of a few years would become overcrowded with men and animals, and especially all kinds of noxious creatures would increase inconceivably, if death did not sweep away every day innumerable millions, and thus preserve the balance. In fine, the earth could not do without the excellent manure which death and decay supply. Well, that is quite true,—after sin, and with it depravity, had first come into God's creation. But why has the earth lost its original fruitfulness so that it cannot support so many? Whence is it that there are so many noxious creatures? And have we any assurance that men and animals would have required so much in order to be able to live had they been free from the sin and corruption in which they now exist? But in the condition in which creation now is, death is certainly not merely a punishment for sin, but also a thing we have use for in nature, a thing which, so to say, we cannot do without, a primary necessity; in other words, a blessing.

This becomes still more apparent if we turn to man and

ask what benefit he derives from death, *i.e.* corporeal death as the dissolution of the connection between soul and body.

Death is no doubt itself the greatest ill, but then, at the same time, it is a deliverance from all the other ills of life. And that is a distinct blessing. It was chiefly that which led so many of the old Greeks and Romans—especially the so-called Stoics—to regard death as a release from a life full of ills, and therefore as a practical blessing. And it must be conceded, that if man had been condemned to live for ever, after sin and misery had come into the world, that would have been a far greater punishment than corporeal death. It was therefore a gracious act of God that He barred the way to the tree of life from fallen man (Gen. iii. 22–24). To live for ever in a state of death would only have been another form of everlasting death. It is such an idea that Greek mythology has tried to express by the legend regarding Tithonus, to whom the gods, in response to his mother's importunate prayer, granted a kind of immortality indeed, but without perpetual youth; and the result naturally was that he gradually became so shrivelled and decrepit that his "cruel immortality was a miserable burden to him." Of such little advantage was immortality apart from incorruption. It is perhaps the same idea which has found expression in the old Scandinavian myths about the apples of Idun which the gods themselves had to partake of daily in order to avoid becoming old and grey, in spite of their immortality.

And what even the heathen have discovered about immortality, all Christians know full well. To us, it is no longer a matter of doubt, that the only immortality which can benefit us at all consists herein, that "this corruptible must put on incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 53). And as a beginning, as a release from the ills of life on an earth that has been cursed on account of sin, we welcome even corporeal death.

Of course, the greater or smaller measure in which the individual has already felt the oppression of corruption will cause the desire for death, for the reason here indicated, to assert itself more strongly in one than in another. So long as a man is full of strength, and all goes well with him, he possibly may not feel very greatly the oppression of the

earthly life, and therefore he cannot welcome death as a release from it at all. But when the billows of adversity overwhelm him, when disease unnerves him, or even only the weakness of age makes him feel life to be a burden, and reduces him to the condition which is so well described in Ecclesiastes xii. 2-7, the matter becomes very different indeed, —then death is welcomed as a release from suffering and pain. Even old Sirach has noticed this difference and described it excellently: "O death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions; unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things: yea, unto him that is yet able to receive meat! O death! acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy, and unto him whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age, and is vexed with all things; and to him that despaireth, and hath lost patience" (Ecclus. xli. 1, 2).

But there is another still greater release, the soul's release from the trammels of the dust. In the coarse, sensual body the spirit is chain-bound. Thought can certainly range hither and thither: we can make long excursions with it. But our ponderous corporeality, which through the senses is bound to and dependent on environment, soon calls us back within our narrow limits of time and space. In dreams man's thoughts may make quite marvellous excursions; but confused features of our every-day experiences mingle most strangely in the soul's free flight, and frequently cause everything to end amiss. Who would not wish to be free from such bonds?

And how dependent our reason is on the health or sickness of the body during our earthly existence! Let there be only a severe headache, and the mind of the greatest thinker is rendered unfit to work at the solution of the vast problems of science. Only one hard blow on the skull may lead to the loss of reason, to insanity. The soul is strangely dependent on the body. Certainly, it cannot be denied that the body is also dependent on the soul. Great agony may cause the hair to become grey in a single night; and it must be admitted that grief and terror can produce bodily ailments; but much more frequently the converse is the case. Is there

anything strange, then, in the longing for death as a release from a connection which thus trammels our spirit, our bodily self, and makes its welfare and efficiency dependent on a thing so gross, a thing so rooted in and bound to matter as the body of this death? Here, certainly, death is a blessing.

Besides, we must consider the great significance of death for our education. In this respect, in truth, it has become a blessing to us, an incalculably great blessing, through the influence it exercises over us, both during our earthly life and especially during the process of dying and the illness which usually precedes death.

There is a great deal preached about conversion and faith, but that preaching would not bear very much fruit if the picture of death with its grave face did not stand behind every pulpit. Death is itself the best preacher, and that in a double sense, for on the one hand all the mortality around us, and especially the death of our nearest kin, preaches of the transitoriness and corruption of our earthly state; and on the other hand, our own death stands threatening in the background. If men could have been assured that they would be allowed to live for ever on this earth, even although the life involved sin and misery, how many would then have troubled themselves about God and His grace and salvation? No, the majority would probably have felt themselves so secure and so much at home on earth, that to their irreparable loss they would willingly have let God keep His heaven to Himself alone. When our hearts cling so closely to the earth and earthly possessions and pleasures now, although we know that we shall soon be separated from them, how would it have gone with us if we had felt quite sure—or let us merely say, could have entertained a reasonable hope—of being allowed to keep them for ever? Death, however, rouses our consciousness. It gives us something to think about. It preaches perpetually: Remember that in a few years you must leave everything,—possessions, honour, power! Set not your heart on what you have gathered into your barn; for any moment it may be said to you, “Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be that

thou hast provided?" Do not misuse life, but "redeem the time"; for life's period of education will close with the examination at death, and on that depends what your fate will be through the infinite eternity! It is with reference to this silent sermon preached to us by death that a wise man has said: "Death is the conscience of life." It means something for the education of humanity that over every human life there stands the inscription: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." It is quite true that the fear of death is not the noblest motive to lead us to seek God, but yet it has its great importance as a goad to awaken sleeping conscience. To God we come only through Christ and the drawing of His Spirit; but to bring us to Him the law is a schoolmaster (Gal. iii. 24), and the strongest expression for the law's sentence on the sinner is death.

The way to death is disease. If there were no corporeal death, there would have been no corporeal disease at all. But to how many has not illness, and especially the last illness, been a source of eternal blessing! Now that sin has come into the world, it is impossible to escape such an extremely effective means for our education for eternity. In this sense, too, we must acknowledge the correctness of the declaration that death is the best educational institution.

And then we come to the very process of dying. Here, certainly, we lack the evidence of experience, since no dead man has returned and communicated to us what he passed through at the moment his eyes closed for the last slumber. But yet we may venture to surmise that, as the soul's connection with the body is severed inch by inch, the vision of the dying man is extended and his eyes sharpened; and dying men have often shown themselves to be wonderfully clear-sighted. When the morning radiance of the coming life casts its first beams into a man's soul, the mists of the earthly life clear away and its delusions disappear. The nothingness of the world and the importance and significance of eternity assert themselves then with a previously unknown power; and when this house of clay begins to fall to pieces, then also the bonds which chain the soul

to the earth, through the instincts of the body as links, are loosened. It becomes, as it were, more thrown upon itself, and thereby also able to test itself and its relation to God more impartially and thoroughly. It is therefore hardly without reason that many men of God have supposed that in the very death-struggle, numbers, like the thief upon the cross, are brought "to a true conversion," and that they who formerly did believe are, by this process of purification, essentially advanced in their sanctification, since a great amount of the dross of sin is burnt up in this last furnace and the inner being is ripened for the coming life. Of course, this hope must not be allowed to render us indifferent in respect to our conversion or the work of sanctification which is to ripen us for eternity.¹

¹ Although it is our purpose in this work to avoid long notes as far as possible, yet we consider it desirable to make an exception here, in order in some detail to refer to the original conception of the process of death, which has been propounded by the erudite, thorough, and earnest theologian Von Zezschwitz, (in his *Apologie des Christenthums*, pp. 401 *et seq.*), even if we do not venture fully to accept the views he sets forth. His ideas are essentially as follows: In all corporeal death there is something vicarious. Nature dies in order to preach to mankind about the corruption of the earthly life. The death of one man preaches to the other: "What I am now, you soon will be," and especially forcible does this sermon become when our dear ones die. In this sense it may therefore be said that the one dies for the good of the other. But with still better reason it may be said that the soul benefits by the death of the body. It is the body that dies, that is disintegrated; the soul is only a spectator of the last conflict of this its fellow-sufferer, and during this conflict it first properly learns what fearful results follow sin. Yet death often comes suddenly, so that there cannot be any question of appreciable mortal pain. But even then the death of the body reacts on the soul in a manner which has an important bearing on its preparation for eternity. Here the author would distinguish between three stages in the spiritual life of the dying:—

1. The soul feels itself to be set free from the body and from the whole creation, and at the same time it also confronts the world that has just been quitted. Then will it appear whether man has his heart-roots in the world. If that is the case, then its everlasting torment will at once begin as soon as the soul sees the world to which it still clings being torn away into the distance, withdrawn from it for ever. If, on the other hand, the man's inmost soul is already set free from the world, the last fibres of worldly desire will be plucked from the soul now as the world manifests itself to it in all its nothingness and all its hollow sham.

2. The soul, set free from the body and the world, is thrown, as it were, upon itself, and thereby, in one instant, gets a deeper knowledge of itself than ever before. It is now unclothed; it stands quite naked for its own self-contemplation. But in this way, too, it gets such an insight into itself that all secre

But death's very greatest blessing we have not yet mentioned. It is what our Lutheran Catechism expresses by the words: "Sin by a blissful death is quite obliterated."

conceits about self-righteousness disappear like dew before the rising sun, and the soul judges itself and its whole life, and casts itself simply and wholly upon Christ, and wraps itself round with His righteousness. But during this serious fiery trial—the real purgatory—the soul of him who has lived for self alone will sink even deeper down into himself, complete its hardening.

3. After the soul's relation to the world and itself has been tested in this way, the glory of the invisible world is opened up to it. That will have this effect on the souls which are set free from the world and themselves, that with magnetic force they will be drawn up towards the heavenly light, towards God and His throne, whilst the others will be thrust back from that light and sink down with an increasing heaviness.

By this triple test, and especially at the last stage, the author thinks there will open up a way of salvation even for the heathen, since the light from God's heaven will be to them a call which they can either reject or accept.

To the objection, that all this seems to presuppose that some time must intervene between the moment of death and the decision which he places in connection with death, the author replies, that there probably will be such an interval in which the souls of the dead will still remain in proximity to the exanimate body. In support of this, he appeals especially to the fact that almost all dead persons who have been recalled to life again have only been dead for a very short time, and that their souls therefore had not wandered very far away. He likewise calls to remembrance that it was the opinion of the Jewish rabbis that the soul remained near the body for three days, and he suggests as worthy of consideration whether a similar idea is not the basis of the fact that Christ rose from the grave on the third day,—still, he does not think that Christ passed through these three stages after His death. What takes place in our case after death took place in His case before death, during the agony in Gethsemane.

This ingenious attempt to draw the veil from the very act of death and that which immediately follows it, is full of interest, even if we dare hardly agree altogether with the author. It has hardly any real scriptural basis to stand upon, and it is undoubtedly very bold. It has manifestly arisen from the need to explain how sin by a blessed death can be quite eradicated, a question which we shall discuss elsewhere more particularly. What the Roman Catholics have referred to purgatory, the author has referred not indeed to death itself, but to a moment in the spiritual life which is closely associated with death. When he will not refer the final cleansing from sin to death itself, then it is because that is not an act, but a suffering, and therefore cannot in his opinion have any such effect.

Against his view, logically carried out, may be urged, in our opinion, especially the fact that death will not be the real decision; for that comes only at a later stage, in the spiritual cleansing process which is connected with it. But the expression of peace which rests upon the face of one who has expired in the assurance of salvation cannot properly be reconciled with the supposition that the real spiritual conflict still remains to be faced (a matter we consider later).

What is involved in this? It is one of those sentences which from childhood we have been taught to repeat, but the meaning of which on that very account we may not have considered carefully.

Perhaps most men are inclined to suppose that it indicates the purifying and ripening influence which the pangs of death themselves exercise on believers. But since no cross, no tribulation, no sickbed which we have to lie upon, in this life has the effect of freeing us from sin, why, then, should this last ailment have that effect? There is, however, it seems, only one shade of difference between this and the ailments we may be exposed to during our earthly career; indeed, it is frequently the case that these are even harder than the deathbed. Besides, there are certainly many Christians who practically have no deathbed, and yet who, we may hope, die assured of salvation. The Christian soldier falls by a bullet, another Christian is struck by lightning. Here it is not possible to imagine that the death struggle can exercise any influence in the cleansing of the soul, and yet we must also in their case suppose that they are permitted to depart in peace, or in other words, that for them, too, sin by a blissful death is quite obliterated. There must therefore be something peculiar to death itself—apart from all disease and all death-struggle—which sets the believer free from the last remnant of sin. Now, what is that?

This question some will probably answer by asking another question: "How do we know that it is really the case that sin by a blissful death is quite obliterated? It appears in the Catechism indeed, but it does not appear in Scripture."

It is certainly quite true that it does not appear in Scripture in this form; but it is there, all the same. The apostle feels quite convinced that when he departs this life he will be with Christ (Phil. i. 23). But without holiness no one is to see the Lord (Heb. xii. 14). It is only the pure in heart who shall see God (Matt. v. 8). And so there must be perfect holiness and purity immediately after death in every one of whom it can be said that he has died a

blissful death. Now, since no one in this life is quite free from sin (1 John i. 8), he must either be set free from sin in and by death, or else he must, as the Catholics teach, pass through a purgatory before he can enter heaven. That there is in Scripture no mention whatever of any purgatory we shall have an opportunity later on of proving at some length. Consequently there is no other conclusion open to us than that sin is obliterated at death, that is, of course, in the case of those who alone can die a blissful death, namely, believers.

This obliteration of sin at death might, however, be conceived of as taking place in several ways. One such way has already been indicated in the footnote on page 50. It lays the main stress on the purely ethical. The soul, through a trial following immediately on the moment of death, will be set free from the last remnant of worldly desire and self-righteousness, and at the sight of the opened heaven will be attracted by the power of the light, as a child of the light, and thereby be lifted up to the throne of God. It is an ingenious thought; but it has scarcely any real warrant in Scripture, and to some extent it rests on suppositions which are not easily entertained (*e.g.*, the period of suspense which, according to this view, must be understood to immediately follow the moment of death). We must therefore look about for some other explanation which not only does not conflict with Scripture, but may even directly support its assertions.

It is natural to begin with the question: What position does sin occupy in the regenerate man? Since it is this sin which, by a blissful death, is to be annihilated, it is clear that the question about what position it already occupies in the regenerate man before death is here of the greatest importance. When it is asked how an enemy can be driven from his position, it is necessary first of all to fully understand what position he does hold.

To this question the Word of God answers, that the position of sin in the believer is as follows: His inmost heart-life, his real spiritual life, is by regeneration so transformed that it altogether becomes new, and therefore also

free from sin. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. vi. 15). The great miracle of regeneration really is that Christ by it converts both Jews and Gentiles into new creatures (Eph. ii. 15).

But by the side of this new man in us, this "inner man," there is another, which by Scripture is called "the flesh," whose "carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7), and which ever "lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal. v. 17). That is so far from being renewed that it is, on the other hand, called "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22). It is so far from being good—even in the believer—that Paul can say of it: "In me, (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18).

If we lose sight of these two so fundamentally different powers in the life of the believer, the flesh and the spirit, the old and the new, we shall most likely misunderstand the position of sin in the regenerate man, since we shall either misinterpret what is said about his freedom from sin, or take exception to the strong expressions about the potency of sin in him, forgetting that the one expression refers to the new man and the other to the old. Of the former it is said: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John iii. 9); and to the latter these words refer: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John i. 8).

Between those two powers—the old and the new man—in the regenerate Christian there is perpetual feud (*vide* Rom. vii. 15, viii. 13), and the work of sanctification is just designed to put off the old man and put on the new (Eph. iv. 22–24), *i.e.* in other words, not merely by virtue of God's grace to prevent the lusts of the flesh from overcoming the spirit, but also more and more to weaken the power of the flesh and limit its domain. It is driven further and further away from the centre of the heart-life, and, so to say, out to the confines, as we get the better of

its lusts, repulse its assaults, refuse to let it have its way, but allow the spirit, our new life, emanating from the centre of the heart, to govern all our thoughts, words, and deeds. That is what Scripture calls walking in the Spirit so as not to fulfil the lust of the flesh (Gal. v. 16).

However, the flesh comes ever forward anew with its temptations, its evil lusts. It is like an enemy who has certainly been driven from the citadel, but has encamped in the town round about it, and from thence constantly renews his assaults. He is driven back, but that does not matter, he always makes another assault. He fires at the citadel, and is fired at by the garrison. That is the fight of the flesh with the spirit, and of the spirit with the flesh.

Now, what is the citadel and what is the town? The citadel is the inner heart-life of the regenerate man whence sin has been driven out, and where the spirit (the new life, the inner man) rules. The town is our body, and our lower spiritual life, our instinct-life, which far more than our real personal life is connected with and dependent on the material part of us, our body, has its stronghold there, and thence ever anew seeks to regain the heart.

It perfectly agrees with this, too, that the former is called "the spirit" (our higher soul-life) and the latter "the flesh," an expression whose significance sometimes closely approaches that of "the body" (occasionally it means the very same, *e.g.*, in 1 Cor. xv. 39; Eph. v. 29), and sometimes implies the sum of all the impulses governed by sin, all evil lusts (*vide* Gal. v. 19–22).

But the real proof that the case is as we have been trying to point out will be found in Romans vii. 15–25. It is here the apostle speaks about his double Ego, a higher, which is dominated by the good, and a lower, in which sin still holds sway. Of the first Ego he says: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man"; and of the second, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." The one leads him to will to do good; the other lies in wait for him, renders him impotent, and prevents him from doing the good he desires to do. But still that he, in the regenerate will, sees his real Ego, appears quite distinctly

from the passage: "It is no more I that do it (the evil, which he does against his will), but sin that dwelleth in me." And if we ask where this sin in him dwells, he replies, as we have seen: "In the members" ("the law of sin which is in my members"); and so at last he breaks out: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We should have expected "the body of sin," an expression which, in Romans vi. 6, he uses of the whole old man. But since Paul sees sin and death to be so closely related that death is the wages of sin, and sin is death's sting, then the meaning becomes practically the same.

It appears, therefore, that we may assert as Paul's view, that the citadel in the regenerate man which has been captured by God's Spirit is his real I, his higher spiritual life; whilst the body, and the instincts and impulses essentially connected with it, are still a stronghold for the old man—the law of sin in the members. It is the town surrounding it that is still occupied by the enemy.

Now, how is the enemy to be driven from the town?—driven away so that he can never more return, never again find a stronghold there?

The surest way is to burn the town, and thereby deprive the enemy of his dwelling and his cover. That was what the wise citizens of Fredrikshald did in 1716, when they set their own houses on fire in order to free the town, and thereby also the fortress, from their enemies. And that is what death does for our fortress (our higher self, our regenerated spiritual life) by a dissolution of "the members" in which the law of sin resides. It is in this way that "sin by a blissful death is quite obliterated."

In this lies death's last and greatest blessing. But this very way of considering the matter also explains to us why death can give no such blessing to the unregenerate. In him there is no fortress to be saved when the town is set on fire; for in him the enemy exercises sway in the fortress itself (the heart of hearts), and what benefit can he gain by the conflagration of the town?

To the regenerate man, looking at it thus, death appears in a new light, since at the very moment when it properly reveals its might (*i.e.* at the moment of death) it

unconsciously loses it by the abolishing of sin. It is the same with death as with the devil when he brought Jesus to the cross. It looked, indeed, as if he had conquered then, but in that apparent victory lay an irretrievable defeat. If the sting of death is sin, and sin is abolished at death, we have good reason to exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 55-57). Just think—victory over sin at death, which is the very wages of sin! "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

NOTE.

Against this last view of death, namely, that it is a supreme blessing, because it absolutely roots out sin by driving it from its last place of refuge when the body is destroyed, I can imagine that two objections may be raised, viz.:—

1. It is not so very certain that in Romans vii. 15-25 there is reference to the regenerate man, and so the essential scriptural proof for this view disappears. To this we can only answer, that it is impossible for us in this place to enter exhaustively into the purely exegetical question; but yet we must regard it as impossible that it should be said of the unregenerate that in him there are two powers which contend with each other, a good and an evil, or that it should be said of him that "he delights in the law of God, after the inward man." It is said, however, of the natural, unregenerate man, that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. viii. 21). And it is this consideration, too, which has compelled men like Augustine, our Reformers, and the majority of orthodox commentators up to Philippi, Delitzsch, and Bugge, to hold fast to this view. Those of us who hold it, at any rate, find ourselves in good company.

2. According to this view, sin will be too much referred to man's natural side, connected too closely with his corporeality, regarded too much as something physical, so that its ethical and spiritual side does not get its due. Especially, according to this view, is the abolishing of sin by a blissful death reduced too much to a natural process.

To this objection we remark:

a. After the Fall, sin comes actually to the individual by a natural process, since by conception and birth it is planted in him as a sinfulness slumbering in a natural soil, which only later, just in proportion as the conscious life awakes, reveals itself in the real personal life and subjects it.

b. When a man repents, it is because God's Spirit obtains the mastery over the sinful personal life—especially its will—and conquers it, whereby sin in it is, as it were, driven back to the natural soil from which it had sprung up when it secured possession of the personality.

Since sin thus, by a natural process, by heredity, entered the natural side of our life as original sin, it does not seem to be a strange thing that in a

corresponding way, by death, it is removed from our natural side, after it already, by the effect of God's grace, has been driven from the supremacy it had secured in our actual personal life.

We do not by any means wish to maintain that wickedness in the regenerate man no longer affects his personal life ; on the contrary, we admit that, from its seat in the spiritual life, it makes constantly more or less successful assaults upon his personal life, stretches its arms into it, and, unfortunately, also often gains a partial influence over it ; but here sin has not its throne so long as the man does not relapse from his state of grace. Its real seat in the regenerate is neither spirit nor body, but the boundary between both, to which the instinct-life must principally be referred,—perhaps nearer the body than the spirit,—and it is thence that death drives it away.

That, along with this all through life and right into death, there must be an ethical conflict with sin and victory over it, we have never wished to deny. And even this assuredly finds in death its completion and close ; and with regard to this last point the thoughts of Von Zezschwitz, whom we referred to in a previous note, well deserve serious consideration.

How difficult it is, without the explanation previously given, to avoid the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, appears very plainly in the recently published correspondence between Martensen and Dorner (II. pp. 339, 441 *et seq.*). Martensen thinks that “for the souls of many even of those who die in justifying faith, there is in store a purgatory.” Dorner practically agrees with that, and adds : “The main reason I have for such a conclusion is that we must otherwise regard death as a deliverer from the power of sin, consequently perceptibly and in principle set the evil in the body.” (This last is due to a misunderstanding.)

B.—IMMORTALITY

IMMORTALITY—what a sweet word it is, and what a weighty word! Whilst death is the sworn enemy of the human race and a very king of terrors, immortality, as its direct opposite, is but an expression for that which we sigh and long for under the dominion of death. Immortality is one of those words which cause the deepest strings of our hearts to quiver in blissful expectation.

And yet how vague and indefinite frequently is the conception we connect with that glorious word! Of course, everyone finds at least this in it, that all is not over at corporeal death,—that there is something of us which still lives, or something in which we still live, even if our tabernacle of clay collapses, if our body returns to the dust. But if we ask what it is that survives the body's death, or, in other words, wherein immortality really consists, then opinions diverge from each other as widely as the poles.

In our day there are certainly not many in the civilised world who do not entertain a hope of immortality of some kind or another. Man's natural longing for immortality is so strong that they who have no knowledge of God at all, or do not hesitate to deny the existence of God, cannot altogether cut themselves adrift from the hope of a kind of immortality, even if it is as different from the Christian's hope of immortality, as their faith is different from his. The result of this has been that the word immortality has obtained different meanings within different circles according to their different spiritual standpoints. It becomes necessary, therefore, to look a little more closely at these differing significations.

In the first place, then, we meet many people who speak

a great deal about "immortality," yet without believing in any personal existence after death. Now, what do these mean by their immortality? Well, they mean that the individual will *live in posterity on this earth*. We come upon this thought in its simplest and most immediate form as a hope of being able to live in children and grandchildren, and their children to infinite generations. The individual, as it were, seeks compensation for his lack of hope in a personal immortality by contributing his share to the life of the race, and so continuing to live in that.

It is doubtless such a thought—more or less conscious—that is the explanation of the fact that the less certainty a people has of the life after death, the more anxious the individuals become not to die childless. Consequently, among the most pagan races it is considered a very great disgrace and cause of grief for a wife not to become a mother; and such was the case among the Israelites in the Old Testament Age, when men still had very dim ideas about what lay beyond the grave. This we shall endeavour to demonstrate in some detail.

It is quite true that efforts have frequently been made to explain this dread of the disgrace of childlessness in Israel as indicating that the whole nation, so to speak, yearned for the time when the promise about the coming Saviour should be fulfilled, and that every wife therefore regarded her life as a failure if she did not succeed in contributing her share towards the preservation of the nation from which the Saviour was to spring,—the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head. But this presupposes both a more reflecting mind and a more lively Messianic expectation than we can expect to find in every woman in Israel; and besides, it does not explain at all the fact that the same dread of childlessness is also found among many heathen races. No, the explanation is sufficiently apparent in this, that by the side of the personal instinct of self-preservation, and in close connection with it, there is an instinct of race-preservation in man, which makes him wish to extend his life beyond the few years which are granted to the single individual, and to live with the life of the race.

That is, as it were, the natural side of the longing for immortality; and so far as the many are concerned who are still practically living a life of nature, it is unfortunately also almost the only one in which it reveals itself, and that both among pagans and nominal Christians. The more men adore their children in whom they hope to live in the coming generations, the less do they trouble themselves about their own individual, personal immortality, or about the state which awaits them beyond the grave.

Another and more philosophic side of this hope of a historic immortality we find in Positivism, that tendency of thought of recent times which was essentially systematized by Comte, a philosophy that rejects all revelation and all ideals, and will not acknowledge any other truth than that which depends upon the observations we are able to make with our five senses. Positivism also promises us "immortality," but it is the immortality of commemoration. We should strive to do something to attract attention so that we may live in the annals of history. That is, say they, the only immortality we should desire.

In its fundamental features, however, that is a very old view. It is at the root of what has been called "the higher ambition," and has produced plenty of great exploits. Many great men have been incited to their achievements by the thought that they will make themselves immortal by doing some glorious deed which will last as long as the world endures, leave behind them a series of acts which will stand in history as a bright and lasting monument. But yet it was Positivism which first reduced this to a system, and which has made so many of the days of the year memorial days of humanity's great men that its almanac resembles a Catholic Saint-calendar, and for that reason Huxley once declared that Positivism is Catholicism minus Christianity. It has certainly, like Catholicism, set up a regular Saint-worship which is to take the place of the worship of God, only that its saints need not be Christians, since Buddha, Mahomet, and Voltaire have as great a right to a place there as Moses and Christ.

Now, what kind of comfort can such an immortality

afford us? It is poor enough; in truth a very pitiful substitute for our Christian hope of immortality.

In the first place, there are very few indeed, who will ever have any part in this immortality! The great mass of men will find no place in history. They live their plain, every-day life in quietness and obscurity. They perform no great deed which will be recorded by history. They are born, and then they die, without any others but their nearest friends knowing much about them. And yet many a time these men may have lived the very happiest lives. There is an old proverb which says: "Bene qui latuit, bene vixit"¹—"He has lived well who has led a retired life well."

In the next place, this immortality frequently does not last so very long, even in the case of those who secure any share in it. How many names there are which have shone for some decades in history and then disappeared altogether! They have resembled certain luminaries which have suddenly appeared in the firmament and have risen until they shone like stars of the first magnitude, but only to pale quickly again and gradually cease shining altogether. Probably there are only very few names which will continue to live in history as long as there is a historic nation on the earth.

And still further, that kind of "immortals" is a very heterogeneous and incongruous assemblage. By the side of the greatest benefactors of the human race stand its greatest scourges. The memorial wreath adorns both a Socrates and a Catiline, both a Wilberforce and a Robespierre. Side by side with the commemoration of the men who have been crowned with honour goes the "Herostratic notoriety," which is just as "immortal" as theirs. So long as the old Temple of Artemis at Ephesus and its renowned builder, Chersiphron, are remembered, it is not likely that there will be oblivion for Herostratus, who set fire to it to gain "immortality"—and accomplished his purpose. And so long as history preserves the memory of men like Philip of Macedon and Henry IV. of France, people will not forget their murderers, Pausanias and Ravallac. But in the meantime, millions of ordinary mortals

¹ Ovid, *Tristia*, 3. 4. 35.

live and die—good men and bad—who get no share of such “immortality.” It is, in truth, a strange justice that distributes the reward of immortality according to such a standard.


In fine, this “immortality” presupposes the personal in order that it may have any value for the individual. Only when I myself continue to exist as a personality can it be any satisfaction to me to think that posterity will remember me.

Not much better is the Pantheistic “immortality,” which is to consist in this, that the soul of the individual at death returns to the universal *anima mundi*, the soul of the world, and loses itself in it as the rivers disappear in the sea. It has, no doubt, the advantage that all may hope to share in it, but, on the other hand, it is a perfectly empty honour, and there is little consolation in being permitted to possess it.

And then, finally, we have what we may call the natural-science doctrine of immortality. It starts with the idea that the soul cannot be annihilated at death, because it is a fact of natural science that it is impossible to annihilate anything that exists, a fact which, of course, is quite incontrovertible, at all events, so far as our experience at present extends. First, they discovered that no matter can ever be destroyed; for when anything decays or is consumed it is only dissolved into its component parts and assumes other forms; but the matter is the same, has the same weight as the article formerly had, if one could only succeed in gathering it together again. Then they have recently found out that the same holds true of all energy. Here, too, there can only be question of the different forms of energy (heat, chemically-held energy, mechanical work) and the transition of the one form into the other, but never of the annihilation of energy.

And so they have said, either the soul is something material or it is only an energy, and in either case it simply cannot be annihilated. If it actually does exist, then it will always continue to exist whether it is connected with the body or not.

Everyone will see that for this argument to have any real significance it must primarily be assumed that the soul is something uncompounded. For what we usually call annihilation is only the dissolution of a compound body. We must, moreover, suppose that it could not assume some new form. But this would just be to take for granted almost all that has to be proved when we are speaking about the immortality of the soul; for of what advantage would it be to us to know that the soul—whether it happens to be matter or energy—could not be annihilated if it could be dissolved, enter into new combinations, assume other forms? When a gold coin is put in the fire and melted into a shapeless lump, it is quite true that we have all the material there, but the coin has lost its distinctive character, and has become something different from what it was. When the energy, which we call solar heat, is first stored up in vegetation, and thereafter when the wood of the tree is consumed or the fruit of the tree is eaten, the energy is again set free and converted into heat or work, it is no doubt still the same energy, but yet it is in a very different form; and it would be small consolation to know that our soul would assuredly not be annihilated at death, but that it might be exposed to such modifications as would practically make it something quite different from what it previously was.



The main result of all this, then, is that the personal is the only immortality which really signifies anything of any value. By that we understand that our Ego, our self-consciousness, our whole spiritual life, with all its natural powers and forces, will be preserved even after death. And it is this personal immortality—immortality in the general sense—that we purpose now to consider. We shall first examine what Holy Writ has to say on the subject, and then shortly rehearse the many other pertinent evidences which corroborate the view we have already formed on the basis of God's revealed Word.

At the first glance it might almost seem as if we must be disappointed with what Scripture says about immortality; for it does not really anywhere directly teach and clearly

demonstrate immortality; and then its expressions on the subject, especially in the Old Testament, are very obscure; and finally, it dwells chiefly on the future life of the pious, and speaks seldom about the immortality of mankind in general.

If we look at the matter somewhat more closely, however, we shall find that all this is not without very good reason. Scripture does not teach immortality, because it assumes it as a matter of course, as a thing on which our whole faith rests. It does not say very much about man being immortal, but just the more about what is the nature of the immortality whose certainty it presupposes. And this it does on good practical grounds. For it is of little importance to us to be told that all is not over at death, compared with the far greater and more important problem of what life we are hastening towards when our earthly life is closed; and it is on this very point that Scripture speaks. This way of regarding the subject is so pronounced in Scripture that it really does not seem to concern itself specially about that immortality which only consists in the soul continuing to exist after death—the empty abstract immortality. It is true that there is considerable obscurity about what Scripture says of immortality under the old dispensation,—as we shall notice more particularly,—but that is due to the progressive nature of revelation, the function of which is not to shed all the light at once, but to let beam after beam fall upon what is dark as the history of revelation gradually advances. It is quite true that Scripture, in the New Testament, speaks mostly about the immortality of the pious, but the reason is that according to its view the pious alone will be able to live a life which really deserves the name, because they, and no others, stand in indissoluble living fellowship with the living God. Outside of this fellowship there is only eternal death, and that does not deserve the name of immortality in the scriptural sense, even if the souls which experience this death have not ceased to exist.

If we turn to the Old Testament first, we meet some passages which undoubtedly might seem to imply that all

is over at death. But it soon appears, on more careful consideration, that such passages only deal with the question, so to say, from its outside, according to the appearance the subject has to the human eye and human sense. In this light we must look at passages like—"O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more" (Ps. xxxix. 13); "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (Ps. civ. 29); "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth" (Ps. cxlvi. 4); "Now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be" (Job vii. 21); "Man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" (Job xiv. 10). Now to human eyes it seems as if the whole man were deposited in the earth and given over to corruption; for the soul, the invisible part, is withdrawn from observation. But how little it is the intention by such expressions to deny the immortality of the soul we see best when we compare such passages as Ecclesiastes iii. 18-21 with Ecclesiastes xii. 7. In the former passage the author speaks about men as if they were quite like the animals, for he says: "Even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath," etc. [So it looks to human eyes; for there is none who sees whether the spirit of man goes upward or the spirit of the beast downward (ver. 21), so that he should be able to demonstrate the difference between their conditions after death.] But in the latter passage, where he expresses what is the real condition, it is said of man: "Then the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it"—one of the most beautiful passages we have in all the Old Testament concerning the believer's blessed hope. Thus the author, in the former passage, cannot have intended to deny the immortality of the soul, however much, to a hasty and superficial view, such might seem to be the case.

The reports of raisings from the dead which we find in the Old Testament likewise presume faith in the immortality of the soul (*vide* 1 Kings xvii. 17-23; 2 Kings iv. 17-37); for raising merely consists in this, that the soul is called

back to the body, and so it must certainly be able to exist after it has left the body. Very instructive in this respect is the passage, 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22, where it is said of the dead boy whom Elijah raised up, that "the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived."

The very same view of the soul's immortality is the basis of the story of the witch of Endor in 1 Samuel xxviii.; for whether it is assumed that Samuel's soul was conjured up from the realms of death or that it was all a satanic delusion, the whole account in any circumstances is based on the idea that the soul of the prophet Samuel still did exist after his body had been laid to rest in his house in Ramah.

Lastly, everything the Old Testament says about the condition of the soul in the kingdom of death would be absolutely irreconcilable with the idea that the soul perished with the body; for then there would be no occasion for any mention of its condition after death.

It is therefore established that the immortality of the soul was unquestioned by the Old Testament believers. It is a very different matter that at that time there was yet little clearness and knowledge concerning the state beyond the grave. But on this subject we shall have more to say in the section dealing with the Intermediate State.

In the New Testament, assurance regarding the immortality of the soul is so pronounced, so plainly expressed, and so thoroughly taken for granted, that there is no room at all for doubt in this respect. But even here it holds true that immortality is not taught but rather presupposed as undisputed and indisputable, so that on this presumption it is allowable to build further. We need only call to mind such passages as the parable of Dives and Lazarus. When it is said that the soul of the one after death awoke in torment, and the soul of the other was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, that would be quite meaningless if it did not presuppose that the souls of both continued to exist after death. And here we have the best proof that this immortality held good not of the pious only, but of the ungodly too.

What the New Testament reports about raisings from the dead [Jairus' daughter, the widow's son of Nain, Lazarus, Tabitha (Acts ix. 36 *et seq.*), Eutychus (Acts xx. 9, 10), and, above all, Christ's own resurrection] is also an evidence that the immortality of the soul is presupposed, a thing which in our consideration of the Old Testament we have likewise pointed out.

But the New Testament says comparatively little about immortality in general; for it dwells mostly on the hope of resurrection, seemingly hastily leaping over the short interval that precedes the Lord's advent and fixing the thought on that which is to happen when He is revealed and the full glory sets in. But on that we shall dwell further when we come to the doctrine of the resurrection. It is, however, a matter of course that since the resurrection is the reunion of the soul with the body, it also takes for granted the immortality of the soul.

Where Scripture speaks more particularly about the life of the soul immediately after death, it places this life in close connection with Christ, for only the continued existence which is likewise a continued connection with Him fully deserves the name of life and immortality.

"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19), says Jesus to His disciples, and that is the firm ground for their hope of immortality. The one who stands in personal communion with the living God, the fountain of life, cannot die; for the God who is his God, "is not a God of the dead but of the living" (Luke xx. 38). Consequently, the Saviour can also say to His followers: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John xi. 25, 26). Just as the Christian's hope of resurrection has its surest ground in Christ's resurrection, so are his expectations of the soul's continued life immediately after death immovably based on his consciousness of his soul's living fellowship with Christ in this present life. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John v. 12), for fellowship with Him is eternal life in its beginning (John iii. 36, v. 24, xvii. 3), and the death of the body becomes to such an one merely like a milestone on the road,

a passage over to a new and more glorious section of life's development. The believer has the assurance of his Lord that where He is there shall also His servant be (John xii. 26, xiv. 3). He Himself, in His intercessory prayer, said to His Father: "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am" (John xvii. 24); and where He is, there life and immortality are. In this assurance of immortality, and with this blessed hope, the believer longs "to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23)—he would like "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8).

Truly that is a hope of immortality which is worth possessing—something quite different from the pale and shadowy image of immortality for which Deism and Rationalism have contended.

That, then, is immortality according to the evidence of Scripture, and for the believer it ought to be enough. But since so many in our days have no faith in Scripture, and since we, who are believers, have to meet the objections which many of these raise against our hope of immortality, it will be advantageous to consider the evidences which, quite apart from Scripture, speak for the immortality of the soul. For, on the one hand, it will be a satisfaction to us to know that what we as Christians believe because it is in God's Word, can also be established on other grounds; and on the other hand, it may be possible by good arguments to lead at least some of the deniers and doubters to doubt their own doubt of a life hereafter. And who knows whether that may not be for them a beginning of repentance towards God which they will not repent?

We purpose therefore briefly to consider these extra-scriptural proofs.

It is natural first to ask: Have we any direct experience of the continued existence of the soul? We have formerly indicated that Scripture supplies us with such experiences in its accounts of those who, having been raised from the dead, have returned to life. But it is of no use to speak of these when we are arguing with persons who do not believe Scripture.

We must therefore turn to experiences outside of the domain of Scripture. Are there any such?

Some such experiences in our own days have attracted much attention. I refer to the Spiritualists. They assert that they can enter into communication with the souls of the dead, and can from them receive information about many subjects which otherwise is quite hidden from us,—and that certainly takes for granted that the souls of the dead still exist. We have even met people who at first have denied immortality, but who, after having pursued Spiritualism for a time, have become perfectly convinced that there is a life hereafter; and we have read of others who have publicly confessed that in this way they have been roused from their indifference to sin,—but then, too, they have at once forsaken Spiritualism in order to seek food for their souls in the gospel.

We presume that some will shake their heads when they see the word “Spiritualism,” and think—That is beneath notice as sheer deception, optical illusion, or at best clever legerdemain,—and then, what does it all signify?

There is no doubt that many of these so-called mediums, who pretend to have the power of communicating with the souls of the deceased, have been nothing but impostors, and many of their impostures have been unmasked by careful observers. It is also certain enough that in so far as Spiritualism sets itself up as a new religion and seduces people from Christianity, it is in its tendency, in its purpose, a delusion of Satan. Now, is the possibility of entering into communication with the spirit-world, or rather, the soul-world, nothing but fiction? It is so easy and convenient—it is so superior, sounds so scientific, to say about all such things that they are merely silly superstitions. To speak in this way is one of the very cheapest ways of attaining to the reputation of wisdom. It is also easy enough to collect a great many stories about spiritualists who have manifestly been impostors, and have been unmasked as such, and then to shake the head and say: “There, you see! It is all pure fiction.” But that is a conclusion with very little evidence behind it; for from the fact that many men pretend

to be clever who demonstrably are not, it does not by any means follow that there are no clever people, and that cleverness does not exist.

If we take up the consideration of these matters a little more thoroughly, and are sufficiently free from prejudice, we must soon confess that there appears to be much in Spiritualism which cannot be explained by the knowledge we at present possess, and that Shakespeare was right when he said: "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

We have not personally meddled with Spiritualism, but we have read a good deal of what has been written about it both by its adherents and its opponents, and also by those who are neither the one nor the other, but have from purely scientific interest concerned themselves with it. The utterances on the subject of such a man as the great scientist, A. R. Wallace, have deeply impressed us. He began his investigations as a decided doubter (he doubted even the soul's existence), but ended by confessing that here was something which he could only explain by assuming that there really is an invisible world of human souls which in various ways can enter into relations with the visible. And the person who has read his many scientific works will know that he is certainly no credulous simpleton, but one of the most acute and accurate investigators of our century. But when—after having with all the carefulness and the caution of an experienced scientist provided against deception—you see articles rising in the air without being touched by anyone, or moving out from or in to locked rooms, see pencils rise spontaneously and write on paper an answer to what you ask about, hear an invisible hand play on a closed instrument, and do innumerable similar things, then it is not easy to resist the belief that there is something here more than mere sleight of hand. And when again and again you have seen either the faces alone or the whole figures of deceased acquaintances, and received communications from them about matters which only they could know of, then you can with difficulty avoid the conclusion that here you have actually in your presence the souls of the deceased;

for there is no ground whatever for supposing that these phenomena originate from evil spirits, demons which pretend to be human souls.

Of course, at this stage there will arise a swarm of questions in the mind of the thoughtful reader: *e.g.*, How do souls possess the power of hovering about thus in space? What conclusions may naturally be drawn from this with reference to their state? Does it hold good of all the deceased or only of a certain class of them? Is it likely to depend on a special divine permission for every single case? And in that event, what can be God's purpose thereby? Is it to give those who will not believe the Scripture revelation a new revelation which shall at least show them that there is a life hereafter? Or can it be to punish the unbelief of their hearts by causing them to betake themselves to something which certainly cannot save them, but which to many may become a new religion in place of Christianity? However, since we are not discussing Spiritualism here on its own account, but only the testimony it bears to the soul's continued existence, we cannot pursue these questions further. We shall only call to mind the fact that Dr. Wallace himself asserts, as among the practical results of Spiritualism, that it demonstrates the immortality of the soul. It does this also to such as will only believe their five senses; for here they have an item of proof which they can test with their senses.

Scripture, certainly, is not against this claim of Spiritualism, that it is possible to enter into communication with the souls of the dead; for when it repeatedly speaks of *familiar spirits* (Lev. xix. 31, xx. 6; Deut. xviii. 11), without ever describing belief in these as sheer superstition, its statements on this point will at anyrate find a natural explanation in what Spiritualism has made us acquainted with. What Scripture maintains is only that God wishes that men should apply for information concerning the living, not unto the dead, but unto their God (Isa. viii. 19). They have Moses and the prophets, and in the New Testament the apostles and evangelists—and these should be enough (Luke xvi. 29). That was the cause of the refusal of the rich man's prayer

that Lazarus might be sent to his brothers on earth,—but it was not because such a mission was altogether impossible. It is not said that there is “a great gulf fixed” between this side and the other side, such as exists between the abode of the blessed and the unblessed hereafter.

Another feature of great importance which also, in a manner, is a subject of experience, is the free flight of our thoughts both in the waking and sleeping state (fantasies and dreams). Our spirit is not so fettered by the body that it can only be where the body is. We can think ourselves so vividly into strange lands and surroundings which are thousands of miles away that it seems as if we were there in reality. Now, is it conceivable that a spirit, which is so far independent of the body during its connection with it, shall cease to exist as soon as it is separated from the body?

We come to the same result if we regard the soul's relation to the body as the energy which animates it. The body is the heavy load; the soul is the horse which draws it. Is it conceivable that the horse will cease to exist simply because it is unharnessed from the load?

Another evidence of still greater importance we have in our self-consciousness and its relation to the change of matter in the body. If there is one thing about which all physiologists are agreed it is certainly this, that the body in the course of a few years changes every particle of its substance. After a period of six or seven years—according to some even sooner—we do not retain the tiniest atom of that which originally constituted our body. But has that any influence on our consciousness? Are we not fully convinced that we are the same person as before, and that we are quite responsible with our whole being even for acts done so far back that a complete change of substance has taken place between these acts and the present moment? Does this not prove that the life of the spirit is independent of the fact that all particles of the body which once composed its garment have long ago disappeared? And is not that an assurance that the spirit can live its life independent of the body?

The materialists no doubt advance a great many objections, but in effect they deny not merely the immortality of the

soul, but even its very existence. According to their view, it is not the faculties of the soul that work in the brain, but it is the brain itself that thinks. It contains, they declare, a great amount of phosphorus, which happens to have the excellent property of being able to shine in darkness, and it is therefore without doubt also the mother of all our "bright ideas"! That is certainly excellent!—No phosphorus, no thought! is their motto. If they themselves had really any faith in such theories, they ought not to write books to convince us, but should rather try to get some more phosphorus introduced into our brain so that it might enlighten our thought-life. But no attempt in this direction, so far as we know, has been made by them. Subtle opponents among the physiologists, moreover, have played them the trick of representing that it is only pure phosphorus that shines, but there is none of that in the brain. There is only phosphoric acid, which gives no light. Besides, there is less phosphorus in the brain than in the legs,—and yet they are not known to have any specially great powers of thought.

However, this way of explaining the soul-life has now been given up by nearly all profound thinkers. They may be sceptical enough on other points, yet they admit that it is impossible from matter to explain our thought-life. But it will serve no good purpose to concern ourselves any further with materialists as such. When we speak of the soul's continued existence, we take for granted, of course, that man has a soul.

There is more weight in the objection that our thought-life seems to be dependent on our bodily health. For an ailment of the body frequently quite incapacitates the mind for work, and no very great injury to the brain is needed to throw a man's whole thought-life into utter confusion. This, then, in the opinion of some, is calculated to show that the existence of the soul is quite dependent on the body, and consequently that it must perish when the body dies.

Here, however, the worker has manifestly been confounded with the tools; and the conclusion is that when the work gets into disorder, then the tools quickly go to pieces, with the result that the worker himself cannot exist except in

connection with his tools! Anyone can see that this view could only have validity if it were demonstrated that the material substance of the brain is not merely a tool of the soul, but the very soul itself; in other words, that the worker and the tools of our thought-life are one and the same. But since all attempts at explaining the thought-life from a material element (the substance of the brain) have been frustrated, the whole objection resolves itself into a misunderstanding.

An example will best show what we mean. Let us imagine a factory operative who has to attend to some intricate machinery with many wheels. A wheel goes to pieces and the whole machinery is thrown out of order and cannot work, even if the operative who attends to it be possessed of the greatest skill. But does that show that the worker is identical with the machine and cannot exist except in connection with it? No; it merely shows that when he has to work with that tool, his efforts are dependent on that tool being in good order. And so it is with the soul, which, during its earthly existence, works with the brain, nerves, and organs of sense as its tools.

And then we come to man's gift of perfectibility, *i.e.* his ability to advance to ever greater perfection. It is this attribute which has been the great essential condition of all progress both in the individual and in the human race as a whole. Experience teaches that the mind of man is capable of a constantly increasing perfection. It contains in itself from the moment of birth a dormant germ of continuous development. But how does this development progress in life? Well, it so progresses that even the best and greatest minds only reach so far that they leave life with the consciousness of having made a small beginning towards it. (The renowned Laplace has said: "What we know is inconsiderable; what we do not know is immeasurable.") Their longing for knowledge is infinite, and their capacity for continued development is present, even if their body, weakened by age, places obstacles in the way of the continued thought-work. They leave this life with unanswered questions in abundance, unsolved riddles innumerable. And as it is with our

intellectual development, so it is also with the religious and moral. Here, too, there is even among the best only a feeble start. Is this to be a beginning without an end? Is there never to be a continuation? Will the questions never be answered and the riddles never be solved? Has Nature given us the power to ask questions only that she may torment us, make us experience the disappointment of receiving no answer? Are these capabilities of a constantly progressive development and perfection vouchsafed us only in order that, after a few years, we may see the development interrupted for ever? Has this perpetual aspiration onward no other goal than to see itself suddenly and for ever cut off from any future when the door is closed at death? Does it not seem rather as if this pointed towards a continuation in relation to which our present life is only a beginning?

Still more strongly does this idea force itself upon us when we think of the many who in this life never advance so far that they can truly be said even to have made a beginning. Without taking into consideration the many infants who die before any of their mental faculties have had time for development, there are certainly very many who undoubtedly possess great natural endowments but who are so situated in this life that they never get even the opportunity of developing them. Others begin well and give rise to the greatest expectations; but just when they are passing through the first stage of their development, death steps in and interrupts it all. For what purpose have all these been endowed with such mental capacities and powers if there is not a future life where the bud can develop into the full flower? Is it nothing but a game with pieces that are squandered, a race without a goal, an aimlessness and meaninglessness that mock any teleology? Is there to be, as it were, a preface to a book that will never be written?

Closely related to what we have just been striving to set forth is man's longing for immortality, his yearning for an eternity. This is so strong that it is impossible altogether to deny its reality, and, consequently, even those who do not acknowledge a personal immortality have had to devise some-

thing to satisfy this longing (*e.g.*, an "immortal reputation"), such as we have formerly more particularly indicated. Whence comes this yearning? Has not the preacher hit the mark when he says of God: "He hath set eternity (the longing for eternity, thoughts of eternity) in their (men's) heart"? (Eccles. iii. 11)?¹ And if He Himself has set this belief in our hearts, it is surely because He Himself intends to satisfy it by a life beyond the grave.

But stronger than all other evidences for immortality is that which has been called the moral evidence—although, in reality, it is both of a moral and religious nature. This evidence has such a deep root in our whole religious and moral consciousness that with resistless might it forces itself even on those who will not acknowledge any divine revelation in Holy Writ, and who consequently set no value on its testimony to a life hereafter.

Those who are intimately acquainted with Deism and the old Rationalism must have observed that there was nothing in our ecclesiastical teaching which these fought for with more ardour than the conceptions of God, Virtue, and Immortality. And even if this struggle was of such a character that from our standpoint we cannot have much sympathy with it, yet it must be granted that it was no accident that placed these three words together; in reality, they are inseparable. For it is plain that whether we start from God or from Virtue, we are led necessarily to the hope of Immortality.

If we start from the conception of God, we can doubtless easily agree that everyone who believes that there is a God likewise thinks of Him as righteous both in Himself and in His relation to man. But if God is righteous in His relation to man, then He must also take care that there is a

¹ In the Authorised and Revised Versions of the English Bible the word "world" stands in the text. In the latter, however, "eternity" stands in the margin, and the American Revision Committee expressed their desire to have that word in the text. In the revised Norwegian, and also in the new Danish Versions, the word used is "eternity." It is demonstrable that the word (עוֹלָם) in the original never has the meaning of "world" in biblical usage. Only in later (post-biblical, rabbinical) Hebrew has it gradually got the sense of "world," probably under the influence of Aramaic and Arabic where the word which is formed from the same root signifies world (the universe, cosmos).

correspondence between his life and his lot; in other words, that virtue gets its reward and vice its punishment. Otherwise He is not a righteous God, and a God who is not righteous is no God. Now, how is it with this righteousness in the present life? Is it really the case that the more virtuous a man is, the more happiness he enjoys? Indeed, no; this is so far from being the case that, on the contrary, it has been a grievous temptation to the children of God at all times that they must see what Asaph saw, and what vexed him so that his steps had well-nigh slipped, viz., that the wicked were prosperous and there were no pangs in their death (Ps. lxxiii. 2 *et seq.*). We cannot deny that in a sense true virtue is its own reward by reason of the inner satisfaction it affords, but our conceptions of God's righteousness demand that there shall be a correspondence between our actions and the happiness or unhappiness He distributes to us in this life. But this correspondence demanded by our conception of God is never fully realised in this life. Now, if our belief in a righteous God is to be maintained, this lack of correspondence, this disagreement or disproportion must some day be remedied; and if it does not happen in the present life, then there must be a life beyond the grave where it can happen. Thus immortality is distinctly demanded by our belief in the existence of a righteous God.

To the very same result we come when we start from our actual moral consciousness, our consciousness of duty and responsibility. We all feel within us (in our conscience) that there is something we ought to do (duty, virtue) and something we ought not to do (vice), and that we have responsibility and guilt if we avoid the former and do the latter. And as virtue demands its reward, or at anyrate escape from punishment, so guilt demands its own punishment. Now certainly virtue may be rewarded and vice may be punished even in this life, but it must be acknowledged that, so far from this being the case, it frequently happens that misfortunes seem to crowd upon the God-fearing and virtuous, whilst the ungodly escape scathless. This again demands adjustment somewhere, some day. And since the adjustment demonstrably often does not come before death, it must come

after it. And this is only possible when the soul's life is continued after the body's death. Consequently, our moral consciousness demands immortality, or at anyrate, a continued—if not *per se* an infinite—existence, after death. If we do not believe in such an existence, we must necessarily fall into the same snare as Job's friends, who took for granted that when one man in this life meets with greater misfortunes than others the reason can only be that he is a greater sinner than they. On that ground they so harshly judged their grievously afflicted friend; but such a view is condemned as erroneous, both by the Book of Job and by the experience of all ages, as well as by the Saviour Himself (Luke xiii. 1–5; John ix. 1–3).

We have here been speaking from the standpoint of ordinary human consciousness. That no one, according to the Christian rule, has any virtue which deserves reward (Luke xvii. 10); that actual punishment for the sin of the believer is not laid on him, but on his substitute, Jesus Christ; and that the punishment of the believer may be for discipline, and therefore be a blessing, is a matter that does not concern us here. It altogether belongs to the dispensation of grace in Christ, which we are not at present considering.

Now, if we recall the foregoing arguments, which, apart from Scripture, support the idea of a life hereafter, they may be summed up thus: the immediate experience of an incorporeal soul-world (Spiritualism); the mind's independence of the body in time and space (fantasies and dreams); the unaltered existence of self-consciousness whilst the material part of us disappears and is replaced (change of bodily substance); the craving in man for immortality; his aspirations towards eternity; the gift of perfectibility which points forward to an infinite development; and finally, the religious and moral evidence implied in the idea of a righteous God, and of duty, responsibility, and guilt, demanding that the disproportion which in the present life is frequently apparent between men's conduct and their lot (happiness or unhappiness) be adjusted in an existence to follow the life on earth.

Since all this has been the subject of consideration, even by those who have not had any Word of God to fall back upon, it is natural to inquire what these have been able to make out of such evidences, or, in other words, what the heathen have thought about the immortality of the soul.

Even our old Church teachers have, as a witness of the immortality of the soul, appealed to the concurrent evidence of all races (*consensus omnium gentium*). There may certainly have been some pagan religions which have taught annihilation. Especially might this interpretation be taken from the religion of the Buddhists, although it may not really have been cessation of the soul itself, but of all its passions and emotions, which it was their intention to express by the word "Nirvana." On the whole, it can undoubtedly be said that there have been very few, if any, heathen races which have not had a belief in the immortality of the soul in some form or another; and although travellers have occasionally reported to the contrary regarding several barbarous tribes, yet, on further investigation, as a rule this has turned out to be based upon a misunderstanding.

Especially instructive are the expressions of the old Greeks and Romans about their hopes of immortality, and we may turn our attention particularly to them for a little. The views of aboriginal tribes we cannot further pursue here. They would demand a volume for themselves. Besides, we could not learn much from their views, since there would be afforded no further proofs of the soul's continued existence, but only indefinite ideas about the future state, to which we shall refer in the next section.

The Greeks generally assumed (though not without some hesitation) that there was a life hereafter, even if to the majority it appeared but an empty shade-life. From their sages we have many graceful expressions about immortality. Plato especially pursues the subject somewhat fully in his *Phædo*, where he makes Socrates say many beautiful things regarding the future life. For instance, Socrates is represented as saying that the reason why he is prepared to meet death so courageously is that he is assured that after death he will "join the company of gods who are very good masters,"

and of "men who are better than they were on earth." Then he goes on to show that death is a deliverance from the dominion of the body and the senses, and that only after that deliverance can the soul fully know the truth; therefore the wise man loves death. When one of his friends, Cebes, draws his attention to the fact that some doubt still prevails as to how far the soul actually exists after death, he refutes this doubt by seeking to show that the soul, as something invisible, immaterial, must, when separated from the body, go to the invisible gods [reminding us of the words of the apostle: "The things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18)], and spend eternity in the company of the gods. It cannot be denied that he here gives a hint that he has considerable doubt about the immortality of those who have allowed the instincts of the body to obtain the mastery. Possibly we already meet here the idea of a "conditional immortality," an idea which in recent times has gained considerable currency, chiefly in England, in the form of the doctrine that the souls of the unsaved will at last be annihilated ("Annihilationism"), of which we shall have more to say when we come to discuss "eternal death."

In his further treatment of the subject of immortality, Socrates points out that everything has its idea, which is its true essence. The idea of the soul is life; but on that very account it cannot die, it can only leave that which it has animated (the body). Then he concludes by beseeching the gods that "the removal hence to that place may be a happy one."

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that this exalted view was the common view in his day. On the contrary, he designates it as the opinion of most people that the soul at death is, as it were, blown away and destroyed. At a somewhat later date the poet Moschus, in his elegy on Bion, says: "Seized by death, he sleeps hopelessly in the dust, a long, perpetual, endless sleep." And from the Homeric poems, dating probably from about 1000 B.C., it appears that belief in immortality was still very vague and variable.

It is doubtful whether Plato's distinguished disciple

Aristotle believed in any personal immortality, although he admitted that faith in it was so old and deeply seated in humanity as to make its origin difficult of discovery.

His contemporary, Xenophon, however, puts a very beautiful utterance about immortality on the lips of the dying King Cyrus, who, among other things, is represented as saying: "I, for my part, my dear children, can never be quite persuaded that the soul only lives so long as it inhabits this mortal body, and dies when it is separated from it. Nor have I been able to take for granted that the soul loses its power of thought when it is separated from the body, which certainly cannot think. At the very moment when the spirit is set free, unalloyed and pure, will it naturally also become more intelligent. . . . Remember, too, that nothing so resembles man's death as his sleep. In it the soul of man appears to be most divine; then it foresees much of what is future, then it becomes apparently most free." But, it is quite true, doubt breaks forth afresh when he concludes by saying that he will soon now be quite certain, since he "either will be with the gods—or cease to be" (*Cyrop.* viii. 7, 19 *et seq.*).

The Greeks had already observed the necessary connection between belief in immortality and belief in the providence of God, and its relation to man's virtues and vices. Plutarch says: "The evidence for God's providence and the immortality of the human soul is identical, and the man who gives up the one must also give up the other." And another (Cariolan in *Dionys. Hal.*) says: "If the dissolution of the soul followed on that of the body, then I do not see why I should deem those happy who, so far from enjoying any temporal advantage from their virtue, rather perish by it."

Among the Romans it was principally Cicero—and in a less degree Seneca—who entered thoroughly upon the consideration of this question. Cicero again and again returns to it, and discusses it with manifest delight, in the first book of the *Tusculan Disputations*, which undoubtedly is the most exhaustive treatise on the subject that has been handed down to us from classic times. He appeals to the whole evidence of antiquity and to all nations, since they all agree in believing

that souls continue to exist. He points to the unconscious hope of immortality which already reveals itself in men striving after a future which stretches beyond their earthly life, and he asks: "What signify descendants, a famous name, the adoption of children, solicitude about the disposal of money, monuments on graves, panegyrics on the dead, if we do not think of the future?" He asks, too, who would care to sacrifice himself for his country if there were no immortality?—an utterance which strikingly recalls a similar one by Bismarck. He draws attention to the fact that the immortality of posterity would have no significance for us at all without the existence of a personality that could enjoy this renown. Moreover, he goes back to a saying of Plato's, that the soul must be immortal because it is always in motion; and that which is always in motion is immortal;—by which he no doubt means that it is self-moving, not animated by anything, but is the very principle of life itself, and on account of this its nature can never die. Finally, he tries to show that the faculties and powers of the soul are of such a nature that we cannot explain it at all, and consequently it is something divine and therefore also immortal. The power of thinking, understanding, willing, is something characteristic of the human soul, something distinct from all the rest of creation, and therefore something heavenly, divine, and, of course, eternal ("Cæleste et divinum, ob eamque rem æternum sit, necesse est." Lib. i. 27).

In his book, *De Senectute* (Concerning Old Age), Cicero again returns to the nature of the soul as something self-moving, and he also indicates a feature which we have already previously noticed: that the soul is something uncompounded, and therefore cannot perish, because all perishing in reality is a dissolution of some compound. He likewise anew emphasizes the soul's characteristic constitution, and says: "I am convinced, I feel, that since souls have such celerity (rapid movement of thought), such a recollection of what is past, such sagacity with respect to the future, so many arts, sciences, and inventions,—a nature such as contains all this cannot be mortal." He believes that the renowned dead he has known not only still live, but that "only the

life they now live fully deserves to be called life ; for, whilst we are fettered by the trammels of the body, we work under grievous necessity, because our heavenly spirit is excluded from its high home, confined to the earth, a place which is foreign to its divine and eternal nature." He feels that "his soul, in a manner inexplicable to him, aspires upward"; he hopes to "leave this life not as one leaves his home, but as he leaves an inn, because nature has given it to us only for a lodging and not for an abiding-place." And at the thought of this removal he breaks out : "O glorious day, when I shall be able to leave this confusion and this squalor behind, and go to join the divine assemblage of the spirits."

C.—THE KINGDOM OF DEATH AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

(Heathen, Jewish, and Christian Views of the State that follows Death)

Hitherto it has been our endeavour to show that both Scripture and experience testify that all is not over at death; and we have seen that this truth is so deeply rooted in human nature, that it has in a distinctive manner grown into the consciousness of the different peoples and races, for nearly all of them suppose that there is a personal life after the close of this earthly existence.

However, there is another question still more important than that. We are not greatly benefited by simply believing that there is an existence after death, if we are unable to form any idea as to what the nature of that existence is. This subject, then, will be the next to occupy our attention.

At this point we enter regions where experience altogether fails us. Hitherto we have, at least to a certain extent, been able to receive some assistance from experience. Even on the subject of the immortality of the soul there were so many analogies from our present life that we felt justified in drawing conclusions from them; but now we are face to face with a problem in which the divine revelation found in Scripture

alone can guide us. How necessary this revelation is, and how impossible it is for us without it to grope our way to any knowledge of the state which the soul enters after death, we learn from the fact that whilst nearly all races are agreed in holding that there is a personal immortality, there seems no end to the differences between them the moment we ask any question as to the nature of the state in which the spirits of the deceased find themselves. And how could it be otherwise, so long as each race was left to its own anticipations and the unchecked flight of its unbridled imagination !

The Conceptions of the Heathen

Of course, we cannot here enter upon an exhaustive survey of the views of the different heathen peoples on the state after death. The one who desires to thoroughly master this subject must be referred to other works.¹ We can give only a few examples of this everywhere indigenous eschatology, this self-sown doctrine of the last things.

If we begin with the extreme North of America we find that the Greenlanders and Eskimos imagine the abode of the dead to be on (or under) the bottom of the sea (for they get their sustenance in the present life from the sea), where they find plenty of fish, seals, and reindeer, which can be easily captured, and where perpetual day and summer reign. Yet their ideas in many respects vary considerably ; for sometimes they seem to be uncertain as to whether all will reach that abode happily ; and sometimes, along with this idea, there is another according to which the deceased ascend to the skies, where they appear as the Northern Lights, and dance on the dome of heaven, although they generally suppose that it is the good-for-nothing who go there ! They seem also to have a dim notion of a coming resurrection. When all men are dead there will be a great deluge which is to wash the whole earth clean. Then will all nature be

¹ *Vide, e.g., E. Spiesz, Entwicklungsgeschichte der Vorstell. v. d. Zustände nach dem Tode ; H. Lüken, Traditionen des Menschengeschlechts, pp. 450-89 ; Waitz-Gerland, Anthropologie der Naturvölker.*

renewed; then will the dead arise. God will breathe twice on men and once on women, and then they will all come to life again.

The views about the state hereafter held by the North American Indians are very remarkable. When the soul leaves the body it must, on a thin rope, pass over a large lake to a beautiful island. The ungodly, who have an evil conscience, walk with uncertainty and fall into the lake. A more general tradition is that the soul has to cross the lake in a stone canoe. By the shore of the beautiful island judgment is passed upon the actions of the individual on earth. If the necessary standard is reached, then the soul is permitted to land in safety; but if not, the canoe sinks and the individual remains standing in the water up to the neck, an idea which of course indicates the belief that even after death the soul has some bodily garb.

These notions, however, differ considerably among the various tribes, but a characteristic of them all is that they assume the existence of separate abodes for the pious and the ungodly (according to their views of piety and ungodliness); and some of them (*e.g.* the Mexicans) seem even to believe in an intermediate state for those who are neither specially good nor specially bad. Moreover, the several tribes depict these places each in its own way, and they likewise refer them to very different regions,—on the earth, or under the earth, or in the moon, or even in the Milky Way. Some (*e.g.* the Tlaxcallaese) believe in a peregrination of souls.

The most highly developed views on these subjects naturally were those of the half-civilised aborigines of Mexico and Peru. The Aztecs in Mexico believed in three kinds of existence for their deceased. The bad after death were relegated to the gloomy under-world; the good went to a paradise of bliss; and the rest of the dead who were neither altogether good nor altogether bad found their abode in a place corresponding to their condition, a kind of intermediate state between bliss and unhappiness, an earthly paradise. But it was not exactly their various religious and moral states that decided in which of these classes each one

should be ranked. On the contrary, it depended partly on their social position in this life and partly on the manner of their death. Thus warriors who fell in battle, women who died in childbirth, and men who were sacrificed to the gods, were entitled to enter the highest state of bliss, the heavenly paradise, in the sun. Leprous, paralytic, dropsical, drowned, or lightning-struck persons entered the earthly paradise—whilst those who died of disease were consigned to “the under-world,” just as our pagan Scandinavian ancestors believed that such persons were relegated to the cheerless Helheim.

Related to these notions were the opinions of the Peruvians, who, however, seem to have asserted more definitely that the lot of men hereafter depended on their good or bad behaviour in this life, according to which sentence was passed on them by the gods at death. But they did not believe, as the Mexicans, that there were three places; to them there were only two—one with actual penal suffering for the bad, and another with comfort for the good, yet of such a kind that there was no expectation of real bliss, but only of freedom from suffering.

In the South Sea Islands, ideas on the subject vary extremely in the different groups, as is naturally to be expected in an island-world peopled with races so multifarious and so far apart. Sometimes the abode of the dead seems relegated to distant islands, sometimes to subterranean regions, sometimes to the sun. Some place all the dead together, and others make a distribution into two or three different abodes according to the different states of the deceased. Yet here again it is certainly not the moral condition that turns the balance, but it is the higher or lower social status of the individual in this life that is the determining factor (kings and magnates reach a more glorious place than common people; about the immortality of slaves considerable doubt is felt). If he has violated “taboo” (*i.e.* touched any consecrated thing which ordinary mortals have no right to approach), then his damnation is assured; and in many places bliss is forfeited if a man has failed to be tattooed or has not been properly buried. Most

certain to reach the place of bliss is the man who has gained for himself "a consecration" by slaying an enemy. In some places the view prevails that a man's destination after death does not depend on his position or merits; for, when he dies, a good and an evil spirit fight for his soul, and sometimes the one, sometimes the other prevails, and on the result of this conflict his fate depends. That the dead can appear to the living and exercise an important influence on their destiny seems to be universally believed. Sometimes the deceased are supposed to return to the earth in other bodies. Generally there is an extreme vacillation, hesitation, and indefiniteness in their ideas regarding these things, a state of matters which is quite to be expected in places to which the light of revelation has not yet penetrated.

Even the Australian aborigines, however low they may stand in the scale of civilisation, have formed an idea of the state hereafter, but it is excessively indefinite, vague, and variable. Sometimes it is said that the soul sits in the tree tops and laments, sometimes it resides in the clouds, or on a distant island, or in a subterranean grotto; some even say that the dead return to the earth as *white* people. This last notion is possibly a conclusion drawn from the paleness they have observed in the bodies from which life has fled. Life in that land of the deceased is depicted, of course, with colours borrowed from the earthly life.

In Madagascar, whose inhabitants must likewise be reckoned as belonging to the great island-world of the East, the idea of the future state is also uncertain. Now it is said that souls remain in the vicinity of the graves where the bodies are laid to rest, now they are supposed to be assembled on a huge mountain in the South called Ambondrombè. But of the life they there lead nothing is known, although occasionally it is declared that from that mountain the sound of music and dancing is heard (the howling of the wind on the mountain tops?). But that the Malagasy attribute to the spirits an important influence on the destiny of the living is best shown by the fact that they worship them and pray to them even more than to their idols. In South Betsileo, where the African race-type is more prevalent, they

recognise their deceased in certain snakes, which are therefore treated with great reverence.

Here, indeed, we are already on African soil, for, as is well known, the idea in South Africa, that the spirits of the dead take up their abode in certain snakes, or that they are transformed into snakes, is a very general one, and we are specially acquainted with the idea through the Amatlosi worship of the Zulus. Although the tribes say little about the nature of the life of the departed, yet they maintain positively that the dead are able to exercise a distinct influence on the destiny of the living.

About the notions of the majority of the African races on these subjects, however, we know extremely little. Only about the old Egyptians have we perfect knowledge. And here we meet with very noteworthy conceptions. Immediately after its withdrawal from the body, the soul must appear before the Chief Justice in the under-world, the God Osiris and his forty-two assistant judges, in the great Hall of Justice, where all the acts of the deceased during this life are weighed in the balance of justice; and only after passing this trial, and wandering through various regions, is the soul permitted to join the sun-god and share his heavenly light and glory. But we are not told anything about what happens to those who fail to pass the trial. Probably the reason of this is that people then, as now, would like all men to be saved, or, at any rate, would not say anything implying the contrary. *Nihil de mortuis nisi bonum.* In the pictures of the judgment-hall there is, however, an opening which seems to lead to the under-world, and which appears to stand there as an indication that that is the road which they go who do not satisfactorily pass the ordeal.

If we now turn to Asia we meet in the old civilised peoples there a more or less intricate doctrine of the future state. In China it seems, at least according to the old native religion, to have been supposed that man had a double soul, a higher which at death ascends to heaven, and a lower which descends to the earth: a conception of which traces are found among some aboriginal tribes. Only among the more philosophic Chinese sects, as, for example, Laotsze's followers, is

there to be found any idea of a real retribution after death.¹

Among the old Hindus the idea of the future state was considerably developed, and very pure,—for heathens at least. The pious at death go to the god Varuna and to the pious already deceased, to the place whither the first man, Iama, has led the way. When the dead are laid in the earth, or consumed by fire,—for sometimes the bodies were buried, sometimes burnt,—the purified souls fly through the air, cross over the stream of eternity, pass the two infernal, spotted, fiery-eyed dogs that guard the entrance to Paradise, in order that none who is impure may gain admission, and then they enter the spirit-world from which they came. Up there an everlasting light beams forth; there bubbles an exhaustless spring; there all longings are satisfied; there all desires are fulfilled; there joy and gladness ever dwell. True it is that of the activity of the blessed in Paradise very little is said; but certainly it was understood that they shared happiness and power with the gods, and so men invoked them along with the gods and prayed for their sympathy and blessing; and it was also believed that these spirits now and then, especially when they were invoked and presented with propitiatory gifts, came to visit their relatives and friends on the earth and to render them support and aid. On the other hand, those who had scorned the gods and had committed misdeeds were not permitted to enter Paradise, but were hurled down into the deepest darkness. In days of old there was no thought whatever of a migration of souls. The belief in such a migration only developed at a much later date among the Hindus.²

In more recent times (in Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Jainism) these comparatively high and pure conceptions underwent such multifarious changes and perversions as made them almost unrecognisable.

Among the old Persians the idea was (according to the

¹ *Vide* Tiele's *Religionshistorie*, pp. 27 *et seq.*, and *Taa-te-King*, chaps. xiii., xvi., and lii.; also Strauss's *Essays*, p. 93.

² *Vide* Kaegi, *Rigveda*, pp. 95 *et seq.*, and 206 *et seq.*; also, H. Zimmer, *Altind. Leben*, pp. 408-22.

Zendavesta and Bundehesch) that the souls of the deceased passed over a very narrow bridge (Einvat)¹ which only the good could safely cross, whilst the evil were precipitated into the infernal regions, and fell into the power of the evil spirits. On the other hand, the good who passed safely over lived in happy fellowship with their god (Ahura mazda) in a radiant paradise, and could therefore afford aid to those who were still living. They could hover about in the atmosphere, visit their old haunts, assist their descendants, bless the pious in their work, fight for them on the battlefield, and the like.

Yet these states, both for the evil and for the good, lasted only for a few thousands of years, until the conflict between light and darkness on the earth had been fought out. In some supernatural manner a hero should be born who would secure final victory for the light; evil would perish, the earth would be renewed by a purifying universal conflagration, and the good god (Ahura mazda) would rule over every living thing.²

Over Mohammedanism, with its detailed picture both of the pains of hell and of the coarsely sensual joys of Paradise, we shall not linger, since it has no independent significance as an expression of the people's anticipations; for Mahomet, as is well known, borrowed the elements of his conception, as of so much else, from Judaism and Christianity, but he turned everything into a caricature by the aid of his glowing and impure fantasy.³

Nor shall we take time to consider the various notions about these things among the Asiatic aboriginal races, but only, in conclusion, refer to the Græco-Roman world and the ideas of the Germanic and Northern nations.

In the Græco-Roman world there is distinctly traceable a progressive development in the conceptions of the future

¹ The conception of such a bridge of the spirits, which by its narrowness becomes a means of separating the evil from the good, is found among many nations both in the Old World and the New (*vide* Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, pp. 357-61). It expresses well the idea that death is the test of a man's state, and that his eternity depends on it.

² *Vide* Tiele's *Religionshistorie*, pp. 191 *et seq.*; Kaegi, *Rigveda*, pp. 212-15.

³ The most exhaustive treatment of the relative Mohammedan conceptions is to be found in a volume published in Arabic by Dr. Wolff on the eschatology of Islam (Leipzig, 1872).

state. According to the earliest view known to us, the souls of the deceased were regarded as pale and impotent shades, without consciousness and without power to speak, beings who only when they could drink blood got back an atom of living energy; for it was taken for granted that there must be a certain corporeality left when the soul was able to lead more than a mere shadowy existence (as in Homer).

At a later date, however, the belief was that souls were quite conscious and able to exercise a certain activity both in the under-world and on the earth, and so men sacrificed to them and invoked their help, and actually set them on a level with the gods, as was generally the case among the Romans (*Divi manes et lares*). But still, it was a joyless life that the deceased were supposed to lead. When Ulysses, according to the legend, descended to the under-world and there found the fallen Achilles reigning as king over the dead, he said that he might be called a happy man who in life had been so highly honoured and after death had become king of the under-world. But Achilles replied that he would rather be a day-labourer in the employment of the poorest peasant on earth than king of all the shades.

It was, too, only at a still later day¹ that there was any suggestion of retribution after death for the acts done in the life, of a formal judgment in the under-world, with a consequent separation between the evil whose punishment and pains (in Tartarus) have in many ways been figuratively depicted, and the good who were relegated to the glorious Elysium, or to the "Islands of the Blessed" in the distant West, where perpetual summer reigned, and where mild, cool breezes ever gently blew. But in former times nothing was known of this distinction. Then all went to Hades, deep down below the earth, where no sun ever shone, and everything was sad, silent, and desolate.

The belief in immortality held by our old Scandinavian forefathers, with which the conceptions of all the Germanic races essentially agree, need only be recalled since it is so

¹ No doubt even in the *Odyssey* there are found what we have here designated as later conceptions. But it is generally agreed that those portions, especially in Book xi., belong to a later day.

well known. In several respects it was distinctly superior to the conception of almost any other heathen nation. Life in Valhalla, it is true, was practically only a repetition of the life on earth; but yet it was a joyous and energetic life, quite different from the life in Hades to which the Greeks pointed, a life reserved for the noble and heroic; whilst the craven and the evil were consigned to the dark, cold Niflheim, where the table was spread with hunger and thirst, where the bed was disease and the wall-drip, sorrow.

We must also remember that all this was but an intermediate state which would only last until the universal judgment (Ragnarok); for after it, Valhalla would give place to the still more glorious gold-roofed Gimle, and Niflheim give place to the still more abominable Niflhel with its horrible venom-streams. Then the intermediate state was to cease and the eternal state to begin in its stead.

If, however, it should prove to be the case that these conceptions have essentially been formed under the influence of Christianity,¹ they would certainly lose their value as evidence of the attempts of the human mind, by its conjectures and anticipations, to grope its way towards some conception of the unknown state on the other side of death.

The Jewish Conception

After this rapid survey of heathen conceptions, let us now turn to the people of the revelation, Israel and the Church, and inquire what the Old and New Testaments teach us about the life after death.

It is perhaps natural to expect here to be at once transported from obscurity to lucidity, and to find a difference as between darkness and light. To some extent that will really prove to be so when we come to the New Testament, but in the Old it is so far from being the case that, on the contrary, it will appear as if, in some respects, the Jewish conception was not nearly so advanced as that of some of the heathen races we have already mentioned, for the state into which in

¹ Professor Sophus Bugge has recently, with great erudition, attempted to prove this.

Old Testament times the dead were supposed to enter seems to have been quite joyless; and of any retribution immediately after death, or any difference between the states of the evil and the good in the life hereafter, there is, generally speaking, in the Old Testament hardly a single trace. We shall now proceed to show this in some detail.

The most common and most simple expression in the Old Testament for the existence after death is that the dead "was gathered to (or went to) his fathers," or "unto his people" (Gen. xv. 15, xxxv. 29, xlix. 29, 33; Num. xxvii. 13, xxxi. 2; Deut. xxxii. 50; Judg. ii. 10; 2 Kings xxii. 20). That this does not mean that the bodies of the deceased were laid to rest in the grave, we learn from the fact that the phrase was likewise used of such as were buried far away from the land of their fathers, as, for instance, of Abraham (Gen. xxv. 8), who was buried in Canaan, whilst the graves of his fathers were in the distant east, in Ur and in Haran. The expression, then, can only refer to the common gathering-place of their own and their already deceased fathers' souls. It is so far from the case that the being gathered to their people, or their fathers, has anything to do with the body's burial in the place of family sepulture, that the phrase is used of a man like Aaron, who was buried alone in the solitude of the desert on Mount Hor (Num. xx. 26), and even of Moses, whom the Lord Himself buried, and whose place of burial no one knows (Deut. xxxii. 50, xxxiv. 5, 6).

The expression manifestly describes the obscure future state from its most hopeful side, when men, although uncertain about the state after death, yet consoled themselves with the idea that they were going to the same place as all their deceased ancestors. Doubly consolatory would that be felt to be in Israel, where they could look back to such pious fathers as the patriarchs, with whom Jehovah had entered into an everlasting covenant. And it was not at all probable that their covenant-God would leave them in death, or after death; consequently, if they believed themselves to be in spiritual fellowship with their fathers, they might certainly hope that they, too, would not be quite forsaken by the lovingkindness of the Lord when the light of the body was

quenched and they had to pass through the gloomy portal which formed the entrance to a still darker future.

Now, what were their conceptions of the place where they should be gathered to their fathers? In the Old Testament this place is called Sheol (the kingdom of death). They who die are said to go down to Sheol (Ps. lv. 15; Job vii. 9, xvii. 16).

But then, what is Sheol?

There has been great controversy as to the primary sense of the word. In ancient times it seems to have been taken for granted that the word was derived from a term (Sha'al), which indicates, to desire, crave, and that the actual meaning, therefore, should be, "the place which always craves more and is never satisfied." That undeniably would be quite suitable as the name of the place,—“that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.” It is, so to speak, an insatiable gullet which can swallow everything, a space which never becomes full.

There are several passages in the Scriptures which seem to support this view, since they designate the kingdom of death as the insatiable, the all-swallowing. “Let us swallow them up alive as Sheol” (Prov. i. 12 R.V.). “Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied” (Prov. xxvii. 20 R.V.). In Proverbs xxx. 15, 16, Sheol is reckoned among the three who are never satisfied, and the four who never say “enough”; and it is compared with the thirsty earth which is never satisfied with water, and with the greedy horse-leech which is ever crying, “Give, give.” And in Isaiah v. 14, death’s destructive judgments upon the refractory people are described in the following strange words: “Therefore” (*i.e.* on account of their sinful life) “Sheol hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.” And finally, in Habakkuk ii. 5, the prediction about the Chaldeans says that these have enlarged their desire as Sheol, and are as death, and cannot be satisfied.

From these passages it might seem as if it must be considered settled that Sheol is derived from the root indicated, and really signifies the “all-swallowing.” But there is one

argument which has led many recent authors to abandon this view and look for another explanation. It has been said: Before it could be asserted that Sheol swallowed everything and gave nothing back, men must for a long time have been thinking about its power and making it the subject of reflection. But during this consideration of it they would already see the need of the word. Now, when men have so fixed their attention on an idea that it becomes the subject of reflection, they must already have given it a name. In other words, this derivation of the word takes for granted too much reflection, and so it can hardly have been the original one. It is also too figurative, too poetically coloured, to suit properly such a very ancient word as Sheol, appearing as it does in the earliest prose books of the Old Testament. It has therefore been supposed that it must be derived from another word Scha'al (= Schal), which signifies being hollow (or low), consequently a gaping chasm, a cavity, and that the primary meaning is a huge subterranean grotto, a gap in the ground, a depth in the bowels of the earth. This derivation would entirely agree with the fact that Sheol is often designated as "beneath" (Prov. xv. 24; Isa xiv. 9), the "lowest" or "deepest" (Deut. xxxii. 22; Job xi. 8; Ps. lxiii. 9, lxxxvi. 23); and finally, it is called "the pit," an expression which occurs repeatedly in the Prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. xxvi. 20, xxxi. 14, xxxii. 18, 24) and elsewhere.

But if it must be admitted that the etymology and primary meaning of the word are doubtful, yet it is not by any means the case that doubt exists as to what is really implied in biblical usage by Sheol, viz., the abode of the souls of the deceased. There was doubtless a time when it was supposed that the word partly meant the grave and partly hell, and so it was quite arbitrarily translated sometimes by the one, sometimes by the other word, according to the connection, yet the very first passage in the Bible where the word appears (Gen. xxxvii. 35) is sufficient to show us that it can mean neither the grave nor hell. When Joseph's brethren had sold him, and told their father that he had been torn in pieces by a wild beast, Jacob at once exclaimed, "I will go down unto Sheol, unto my son, mourning." Here he

could not mean the grave, for he believed that Joseph had been devoured by some beast of prey, and so had not been laid in any grave at all. Nor could he mean hell, for surely he did not suppose that God-fearing Joseph had gone to hell, or that he himself would go thither when he died. Moreover, here once for all we wish to note that no word for hell, in our sense of the term, *i.e.* a place of torment for the ungodly, is found in any passage in the Old Testament.

The new Norwegian translation of the Bible (as well as the revised Danish Version) everywhere renders Sheol by "death's kingdom," or the "kingdom of the dead." There may be diversity of opinion as to how far this is the happiest possible term. "The place of the souls of the deceased" would be the most colourless, and therefore also the most correct rendering, for there is not much more in the word than that phrase covers. But such an expression would be too long and unwieldy. The term "death's kingdom" might easily leave the false impression that there is implied such activity, order, and conformity to law as we naturally connect with the idea of a kingdom.

What conceptions, then, had they in the Old Testament of this "kingdom of the dead," as we purpose calling Sheol, now that we have ascertained the significance of the word?

That it was supposed to be situated in the depths, in the interior of the earth, we may at once conclude from what we have already seen, *viz.* that it is repeatedly designated as "the pit," and that the dead are said to go down to it (Gen. xxxvii. 35, xlii. 38). But still more clearly does this appear from Numbers xvi. 30 *et seq.* There, for instance, it is said—when it is mentioned that the earth opened up and swallowed Korah and his band—that they went down alive into the kingdom of the dead, the pit, Sheol. In Isaiah xiv. 15 R.V. the king of Babylon is told: "Thou shalt be brought down to hell (the kingdom of death), to the uttermost parts of the pit."

In this deep pit, as is to be expected, there prevails a darkness so great that no darkness on this earth can be compared with it. When Job speaks of death, he says: "I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and

the shadow of death ; a land of darkness, as darkness itself ; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness," *i.e.* where darkness is the only light (Job x. 21, 22). And in another place he says that he looks for the kingdom of death as his house, and he has spread his couch in the darkness (Job xvii. 13). In the same sense David also speaks of being made to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead (Ps. cxliii. 3 ; also *cf.* Lam. iii. 6).

And as it was in the beginning, before the creation of light, when "darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. i. 1-5), and there was no order, but all the elements were practically mixed up together, so is it also in the darkness of Sheol, the kingdom of the dead ; for it is called, as we have formerly seen, "a land without any order." And in this chaotic darkness there seems to prevail the most complete silence, a silence of death, wherefore the place itself is often called "silence," or "the silent" (Dumah), as in the passage : "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had soon dwelt in silence" (Ps. xciv. 17 R.V.). No doubt souls *live* down there, but it is a dead and impotent life, and so the inhabitants of the kingdom of death in the Hebrew are often called "Rephaim," *i.e.* the relaxed, impotent, a word which in our Bible is usually rendered "the dead" (Ps. lxxxviii. 10 ; Prov. ii. 18, xxi. 16 ; Isa. xiv. 9). And consequently the psalmist also says, when he wishes to refer to the utmost impotence : "I am counted with them that go down into the pit : I am as a man that hath no strength" (Ps. lxxxviii. 4 ; *cf.* Isa. xiv. 10). Then this existence is compared to perishing (Abaddon), destruction, as when we read, "Hell (kingdom of the dead) is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering" (Job xxvi. 6 ; *vide* also Prov. xv. 11, xxvii. 20). And moreover, this existence in the kingdom of death appeared to the ancients to be so empty and void that in the remarkable but extremely obscure passage, Isaiah xxxviii. 11, "I shall behold man no more when I am among them that have ceased to be" (marginal reading R.V.), it seems to have been called non-existence, cessation. We are not, however, thereby to understand that it was supposed that existence

itself ceased; but its content appeared to have so dwindled as to be almost worthless. We get an idea of what is meant when we read such passages as Ecclesiastes ix. 5 *et seq.*: "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest" (ix. 10). Also in full accordance with this is the psalmist's calling of the kingdom of death "the land of forgetfulness" (Ps. lxxxviii. 12), the land where they forget and are forgotten.

And it is not only the earthly life that the dead have forgotten,—no, they seem even to have fancied that they were forgotten by God, and they forgot Him and the things that pertain to Him. "In death," says David, as he appeals to God, "there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave (kingdom of the dead) who shall give Thee thanks?" (Ps. vi. 5). And in Psalm lxxxviii. 5, 10–12 R.V. it is said: "I am . . . cast off among the dead, whom Thou rememberest no more." "Shall they that are deceased arise and praise Thee? Shall Thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or Thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark? and Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" And in Psalm cxv. 17 we read: "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."

Certainly some passages speak as if down there a recollection of the former earthly life did exist. Such is the case, for instance, in the strange 14th chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet describes how the dead are to receive the king of Babylon when he, too, is thrust down to the kingdom of death; and it seems as if even there they had some recollection of how great a man he had been in this life. "Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee. . . . All they shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee" (vers. 9–11).

And then they proceed to describe what a mighty man he had been in this life, and seem indeed to remember it all. But yet there will always be doubt as to how much, in such a highly poetical section as that, is to be laid to the account of figurative speech (*vide* also 1 Sam. xxviii. 15–20).

When mention is made of worms and maggots, the prophet seems to have borrowed images from the grave and the body decaying there, to describe the kingdom of death and the soul languishing there. That is a common practice with the prophets, and it is peculiarly evident in the wonderful death-section in Ezekiel xxxii. 15–30, which gives us a kind of geography of the kingdom of death under images derived from a huge, universal burial-place.

The prophet, so to speak, sees the dead of the various nations encamped down there according to their tribes, corresponding to their interminable rows of graves on the earth; and so he also speaks of graves in the kingdom of death, but manifestly only in a figurative sense.

That the inhabitants of this land of forgetfulness could not be supposed to have any knowledge of what takes place upon the earth after their decease is certainly only natural. "His sons come to honour" (it is said of the dead), "and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn" (Job xiv. 21, 22). He is altogether engrossed with himself,—he has enough to do with his own afflictions, his sorrow over the sad condition of his soul and over the mouldering away of his body. About the state of matters upon the earth he neither knows anything nor does he trouble himself to learn anything.

We have formerly pointed out that the kingdom of death was thought of as a place without order. There are, however, some indications that so much of order, at least, was presupposed that the individuals were encamped according to their tribes and nations. We have already seen that this view was apparent in the great picture of the kingdom of death in the Prophet Ezekiel (xxxii. 15–30). But the same notion is certainly also to be understood when, as has previously been mentioned, it is said of the dead that they

are "gathered to their people." And lastly, something similar seems hinted at when in Proverbs xxi. 16 there is mention of the "congregation of the dead."

We have already taken occasion to point out that down there they had no knowledge of God or of any fellowship with Him, but that must not be misunderstood as implying that God with His omniscient eye does not look into Sheol, nor reach thither with His omnipotent arm, even if He does not manifest Himself there in His grace. On the contrary, it is said of Him that the hidden, dark kingdom of death lies "naked before him" (Job xxvi. 6; Prov. xv. 11), and that His strong hand reaches right into the kingdom of death. "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: If I make my bed in Sheol, behold Thou art there" (Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8 R.V.). "Though they dig into hell (the kingdom of death), thence shall mine hand take them" (Amos ix. 2).

Of any actual torment in the kingdom of death there is no mention,—but just as little of real joy. Only when, like Job, men feel themselves overwhelmed with life's tribulations and oppressions, could they find a kind of consolation in the thought of the peace and quietness prevailing down there, and of sure deliverance from all their troublers, and mockers and oppressors; for there all were alike; they had the consolation of a common woe (*Consolatio communis naufragii*). In this respect the passage, Job iii. 17–19, is characteristic: "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master." But yet how very little consolation this thought was actually able to afford Job himself we see from later passages in his book, where he even expresses his despair that there was no outlet from that dark region to be seen. If there had been any such outlet, he would have gladly gone to Sheol in order to be quit of the grievous tribulations which had befallen him, and in which he saw an expression of God's anger. "O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave (Sheol), that Thou wouldest keep me secret, until

Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me. . . . All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job xiv. 13, 14). But it was just the lack of this hope that tortured him and that brought him at another time to exclaim: "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave (kingdom of death) shall come up no more" (Job vii. 9). And on the same string Isaiah harps, "The dead live not, the deceased rise not" (Isa. xxvi. 14 R.V., margin).

No doubt such declarations could only imply that no one returned from that place to this life, except when the Lord by some miracle intervened, as at those raisings from the dead of which the Old Testament gives us accounts (*vide* 1 Kings xvii. 17-24; 2 Kings iv. 32-36, xiii. 21). But since in ancient times men did not, except, as it were, by flashes, see any outlet by a resurrection to life, the kingdom of death even to the pious appeared as a horrible, terror-awakening picture. We understand this best when we read the 38th chapter of Isaiah and see how the pious King Hezekiah in his illness faltered and shrank from death and the dark kingdom of death. "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward. . . . For the grave (kingdom of death) cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth" (Isa. xxxviii. 14, 18). How different are these from the words of the Apostle Paul: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. i. 23).

As we read these sketches of the kingdom of death, we can well understand how our old commentators came to suppose that such gloomy pictures must refer not to the kingdom of death in general, but to the after-death abode of the ungodly; in other words, to hell. And yet such an idea is altogether incorrect. The fact that there is no mention whatever of punishment or torment of any kind down there should make us suspicious of that notion. Then how could the pious King Hezekiah speak of being consigned to such a place at death? And how, as we have formerly remarked, could Jacob say that he

would meet with his son Joseph in Sheol if he thereby understood hell? But that it was looked upon as the common gathering-place of the dead both good and bad, we see most clearly from what the Prophet Samuel, when he was conjured forth from Sheol by the witch of Endor, said to Saul: "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me" (1 Sam. xxviii. 19). What! God's prophet, Samuel, the ungodly king, Saul, and his godly son, Jonathan, all in the same place! What better proof do we need that Job gives us a perfectly correct expression of the Old Testament view when he calls Sheol "the house appointed for all living" (Job xxx. 23). All must go thither, and no one can deliver us thence. Therefore, too, the psalmist exclaims: "What man is he that shall live and not see death, that shall deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?" (Ps. lxxxix. 48 R.V.).

Now, if Sheol were the common gathering-place for all the dead, of course, it at once necessarily follows that the Old Testament did not know of any difference between the condition of the good and of the evil after death; in other words, it did not know of any retribution immediately following death. The only slight hint of any difference is this, that the common kingdom of death is depicted with the darkest colours just in the passages where there is mention of the entrance of the ungodly into it, and that in two passages it is said of the worst enemies of the kingdom of God that they descend to "the uttermost parts of the pit" (Isa. xiv. 15; Ezek. xxxii. 23 R.V.).

Dark, indeed, is the picture we have been able to see in the Old Testament of the ideas entertained by God's own people concerning the state of the soul immediately after death. There is no mention of a blessed passage home to God's dwelling-place in heaven; not a word about fellowship of the spirit with God and all His saints on the other side of the grave; not even a definite idea of a separation between the evil and the good! All are gathered into the gloomy kingdom of death,—a place without light, without order, without joy and praise, without recollection of God!

Now, how could the Old Testament believers, without

quite losing heart, endure the sorrows of life and fight its battles when they had no brighter vision of the lot that awaited them after death? It seems to us as if there was nothing for them but despair. Their condition appears to us to have been little better than the misery of which the apostle speaks when he says of Christians: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19).

Certainly it cannot be denied that this lack of clear light on death and the grave gave their whole existence a darker stamp, and exercised its influence particularly on their idea of the blessings and ills of life. The ills of life especially must have had quite a different significance for them since they had not yet been assured of any compensation to be provided in the coming life. And so it is the case that nearly all God's promises and threats in the old covenant are directed to this life. The good are to have a long and happy existence, richly endowed by God with all the blessings of life, whilst the reverse is to be the case with the ungodly (*vide* especially Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xxxii. 23 *et seq.*; Ps. xviii.).

But for that very reason it became very difficult to understand God's dealings when all went well with the ungodly and the righteous were afflicted in this life, since they were unable, as Christians can, to turn their thoughts to the compensation to be awarded in the life to come, a compensation which will completely justify the providence of God. What a difficulty that was to the thoughts of the godly we can see from such passages as the 73rd Psalm. It was to the pious a riddle over which they mused and pondered, until they were quite bewildered. And the solution which is given both in this Psalm and in the Book of Job, is not that everything will be adjusted beyond the grave, but on the one hand, that justice eventually, late or early, will overtake the ungodly in this life, and, on the other hand, that suffering will be to the godly man such an inner spiritual blessing—for cleansing and education—that even with all his sufferings he will be happier far than the ungodly man.

This at least shows us that the apostles of utilitarianism

in our day are not entitled to assert, as they often do, that the Old Testament recognised no other ethics than this, to do what is good in order to obtain the greatest possible measure of temporal happiness. They quite overlook two very important facts, namely, that the Old Testament believers did not do what was good *only* to obtain the greatest possible earthly happiness (although that was promised to them as a reward), but because God had enjoined such conduct in His law (*vide, e.g.,* the whole of the 119th Psalm), and because they knew that even if they should altogether fail to obtain earthly success, they had, in the joy of the Lord that filled their hearts, a sufficient equivalent for it. It is in this spirit that David says: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Ps. iv. 7); "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup" (Ps. xvi. 5); "Thou art my Lord; I have no good beyond thee" (Ps. xvi. 2 R.V.); "Thy lovingkindness is better than life" (Ps. lxxiii. 4).

How worthy of our regard, then, were these Old Testament saints who, with so little light on the future life, continued so faithful to their God!

And we must not overlook the fact that in the Old Testament, in spite of all the darkness enveloping the life that follows death, there were some gleams of light to which we purpose now to direct attention.

In the first place, through all the old covenant there was a strong conviction regarding God's great faithfulness to His chosen people, a faithfulness unchangeable as Himself. (*Vide, e.g.,* such passages as Deut. xxxii. 4; Ps. xc. 1, 2, cii. 27). "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. ciii. 17). Certainly it is quite true that that faithfulness was generally referred to this life as lasting through many generations, since the covenant with the fathers held good also for the children, and so He is merciful to them "that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations" (Deut. vii. 9). But if the Lord thus in His faithfulness had mercy on the living for their dead fathers' sakes, that was a proof

that these fathers themselves were beloved by God, and their existence was not forgotten by Him. And in this there was a good basis for the hope of a fellowship with God after death.

The same may be said of such passages as show that God remembers His saints even after death. When He says that the shed blood of righteous Abel calls for vengeance (Gen. iv. 10), this can only be understood as meaning that the Lord's friend Abel still lived and stood in such a covenant relation with Him that He must take up his cause. And when again and again, in His charges to the children of Israel, the Lord designates Himself as the God of Abraham and of Isaac and Jacob, there certainly is involved in this the thought that these patriarchs still stand in covenant relation with Him and live before His face; for "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32).

Connected with this it was almost natural to find some hope of salvation for all those who stood in spiritual fellowship with those pious fathers, even if that hope, as we have already seen, did not come to full consciousness in the old covenant.

That the pious were able to cling to that hope of God's faithfulness to them even in death we see from such grand sayings as the psalmist's: "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Ps. lxxiii. 26).¹ Asaph could not have spoken thus if he had not entertained a living hope that the Lord to all eternity would be his portion. And when it is said of Abraham, that "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. xi. 10), we are certainly right in looking upon this as an evidence that he actually hoped for something better than the dark shade-existence which we have become acquainted with in the foregoing sketch of Sheol. The heroes of the faith, relying on the faithfulness and grace of God, as it were, broke

¹ It is a matter of dispute whether the same conclusion can be drawn from passages like Ps. xvii. 14, 15 (compare also Ps. xvi. 11, xli. 12, xlix. 15, cxl. 13).

through the barriers set up by the revelation standpoint of the old covenant.

Such a consciousness, however, in the brightest moments of faith we find even in those who are wont to depict the kingdom of death with the very darkest colours, as, for instance, Job. That is the case in the magnificent passage: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand up at the last upon the earth; and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God" (Job xix. 25, 26 R.V.). Although he expected his spirit, freed from the flesh, to see God, yet this is scarcely to be regarded as an event which he hoped would take place in Sheol, but rather as an expectation that God would one day redeem him thence.

There is a similar gleam of light in Ecclesiastes xii. 7: "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it,"—a splendid end to the dark doubt with which the writer in chap. iii. 18–21 seems to struggle.

In the second place, even in the Pentateuch we find the definite conviction that the Lord *can* make the dead to live. The Lord says, by Moses himself: "I kill, and I make alive" (Deut. xxxii. 39). This was the ground of the hope of resurrection which at a later date gradually developed in Israel, and which found a point of connection both in the formerly mentioned raisings from the dead, and especially in this, that God permitted two of His saints (Enoch and Elijah) altogether to escape death. What became of these two? No one doubted that they were taken home to God. But their translation was a pledge that God both could and would grant His children a better and a more glorious destiny than the shade-life of Sheol. And then, was it not a natural conclusion from this thought, that He would one day also set free His saints from the kingdom of death? Therefore also the godly Hannah, in her prayer of gratitude to God, exclaims: "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up" (1 Sam. ii. 6). And perhaps also it is the hope derived therefrom that meets us in Proverbs xv. 24 R.V.: "To the wise the way of life goeth upward, that he may depart from Sheol beneath."

Finally, in the later books of the Old Testament the hope of resurrection becomes ever clearer, primarily as something which mainly holds good of the Church as such, but certainly also of individuals.

"He hath swallowed up death for ever" (Isa. xxv. 8 R.V.). "After two days (*i.e.* after a short time) will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight" (Hos. vi. 2). "I will ransom them from the power of the grave (Sheol); I will redeem them from death" (Hos. xiii. 14). "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. xxvi. 19).

And the well-known 37th chapter of Ezekiel is a plain-speaking witness of Israel's hope of a resurrection; for even if here there is mainly reference to Israel's spiritual resurrection, yet the whole picture would be quite unintelligible to the prophet's own age, if that age were not already acquainted with the idea of the resurrection of the body;—the man who desires to be understood does not borrow images from the unfamiliar, but from the familiar.

The fully developed and definitely formulated doctrine of the resurrection we first meet in the Prophet Daniel (Dan. xii. 2). Here also is the first mention of the resurrection of the ungodly,—“to shame and everlasting contempt.”

The Old Testament doctrine of the resurrection, however, does not directly concern us here, where we are only discussing the state that immediately follows death. We have only mentioned it in order to show what significance the dawning resurrection-hope must have had in sustaining the cheerfulness of believers during the grievous temptations into which their lack of light upon the future must necessarily have led them.¹

¹ Those who are anxious to study more thoroughly the doctrine of the Old Testament on this point may be referred to Oehler's *Vet. Test. sent. de rebus post mortem futuris*, and the erudite work of Boettcher, *De Inferis*. He will then also see to what extent we have followed or rejected the views of these scholars on this subject.

It has been asked: How does it happen that the Old Testament believers in some respects appear to have had an even lower and dimmer view of the nature of the life immediately following death than some of the old heathen races? It seems as if, for instance, the ancient Hindus, from what we have already seen, in a way had more nearly reached the truth than the old covenant people, since they supposed that their pious dead at once were transferred to the heavenly regions, and entered into fellowship with the gods.

To this we must undoubtedly reply, that Israel, as the people of the revelation, did not venture, like the heathen, to follow their natural anticipations or presentiments, or to give free play to their fancy. They felt obliged to keep essentially within the range of the dim light of revelation they had received; and that was very scanty, because it was not part of God's plan at that stage to reveal more of the advancing development of the kingdom of God. And just as little did they consider themselves entitled to borrow anything from this or that Gentile people. They had only to wait patiently for more light. And it gradually came to them, even if the full light upon death and the grave only first arose when He came who broke the seal of the grave, "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light" (2 Tim. i. 10).

Before we leave the Old Testament we must still dwell for a moment on the difficult question: Do the Old Testament ideas of the kingdom of death depend only on a revelation that is defective? or is it indeed the case that the souls of the deceased at that time entered upon such a dark and still unsettled state as the Old Testament teaching concerning Sheol seems to indicate?

Hitherto we have taken the former view for granted. But several theologians of ancient and modern days are in favour of the latter view. Their idea is that the Old Testament believers at their death did not go to God or attain to bliss, but were gathered together in the kingdom of death along with the ungodly until Christ at His "descent

to hell" (of which we shall have more to say in due time) came and set them free.¹

It is manifest that this latter view in one respect has something very plausible in it. To those who confidently regard the whole of Scripture as being intended for guidance to every people, in the sense that all parts of it contain the whole and perfect truth nearly as clearly and maturely as the New Testament, it is naturally somewhat easier to maintain such a view. And this is specially so in connection with the subject under consideration, if it is the case that the deceased in the Old Testament did not really enter into any brighter and better existence than that which its teaching about Sheol describes for us. If, however, it was not the state itself that was so dark,—in other words, if the description of it was darker than the state itself,—then certainly it might seem as if this portion of the Bible were not quite correct, since the words did not correspond with the reality.

Those who argue thus overlook the gradual progress of the revelation which casts even more light on the state hereafter. An imperfect revelation is not on that account a false or untrue revelation. And that in the revelation there is such a progress and gradual unfolding of the truth appears so clearly at many points that there are comparatively few now who venture to deny it. For instance, who now dares to maintain that the Trinity, or justification by faith without works, is taught just as clearly in the Pentateuch as in the New Testament?

That the subject is beset with difficulties must be readily acknowledged; for there are undeniably several passages in the Old Testament where the state of the dead is mentioned in such a way that it is no easy matter to explain them merely as expressions of a still imperfect revelation, if the state actually was the same in the Old Testament as in the New. But the difficulties by the other expedient seem to us to be still greater,—indeed, quite insuperable. According to this second view, one must, as has been indicated, assume

¹ This is the view set forth in his *Eschatologie* by Kliefoth, who, amongst modern authors, is one of the most thorough scholars in this domain.

that all the Old Testament saints along with the ungodly went to such a disconsolate place as Sheol and there awaited the coming of Christ at His descent to hell. But against this the following, in our opinion, decisive reasons speak.

1. It seems to be in the highest degree unreasonable that God should allow the Old Testament saints to languish in gloomy Sheol for thousands of years merely because He in whom they trusted when they clung to the promises had not yet been manifested in the flesh. Just think of such men as Abraham, the "friend of God"¹ and the "father of us all" (Gen. xviii. 17-19; Rom. iv. 16; Jas. ii. 23); or Jacob, who in prayer had wrestled with God and prevailed (Gen. xxxii. 28); or Moses, with whom He conversed face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend (Ex. xxxiii. 11; Num. xii. 8): fancy these men of God living a joyless and impotent life among the shades of Sheol! Here on earth they were in close spiritual fellowship with God,—why should this spiritual fellowship cease as soon as the spirit was set free from its tabernacle of clay? It was not the body that was the connecting link between their spirit and God!

2. We have already seen that the faithful in the Old Testament at certain moments could rise to a brighter and more comforting vision of the life to come than the ordinary one. This becomes intelligible when one assumes that the state itself really was brighter, and that the only thing lacking was a proper recognition thereof. Under this assumption we can well understand that in the brightest moments of faith there might arise a clearness of vision which lifted the individual up above the level of his own generation. But that would be quite inconceivable if the state after death in Old Testament times really was so gloomy as it generally is depicted, for then would that exceptionally bright vision just be an erroneous vision; in other words, the result would be that the more the Old Testament saints, with their eyes directed to the life after death, fought their way in faith to cheerfulness, and believed that they had received light

¹ As a memorial that Abraham in a special sense was God's friend, the Arabs to this day call the town where he chiefly resided (Hebron) *Al-chalil*, i.e. "the friend," the name with which, too, they usually designate Abraham.

upon the kingdom of death, the more did they fall short of the truth! A view which leads to such psychological self-contradictions has condemned itself.

3. And the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is perfectly decisive evidence against such a view (Luke xvi. 19-31).

The characteristic feature in this parable is that it runs on Old Testament lines, but sets the subject forth in New Testament light. Lazarus and the rich man both belonged to the Old Testament, and had come into the state wherein the parable represents them just by hearing (*i.e.* obeying), or by not hearing, "Moses and the prophets" (xvi. 29). No doubt Christ had now appeared, but since His sufferings and death were still in the future the New Testament Age had not yet come.

Now, how should we expect to have the situation represented according to the Old Testament's usual method of representation? Well, we should certainly expect to find Lazarus and the rich man in the same place and in the same state, as was the case with the faithful Samuel and wicked Saul. The Old Testament is silent regarding any separation, any joy, or any penal suffering beyond the grave. But do we find it so here? No, the one is "comforted" and the other "tormented"; and only he who is in torment is in the kingdom of death (Hades, Sheol), whilst the other is "in Abraham's bosom," "afar off" on the other side of a yawning gulf which none can pass over.

What does this prove? Surely it proves that even in the Old Testament there was an entering into life like that of Lazarus, and an entering into death like that of Dives. The states are there; what is wanting is that the clear shining of the New Testament revelation has not yet illumined them, so that the faithful might be able to see and understand whither both they and the ungodly went when they left this mortal life.

For the reasons we have given we are compelled to hold by the supposition that the dark sketch of the future life, as set forth in the Old Testament, does not indicate that the state of the soul at that time was really such, but only that

there yet was lacking light to see how things really were. In a landscape over which black night still broods one can see neither mountains nor plains, but only the darkness which envelops all. But when the sun rises and dissipates the darkness the whole prospect seems to change, and yet it is the same landscape. It is not the landscape but the light that has undergone a change. So is it with the state of the dead in the New Testament compared with that in the Old. It is essentially the same state, but in a new light.¹

The Christian Conception

When we turn to the New Testament we find ourselves in other regions altogether. There is no longer any question regarding what views men have held about the life that follows death in this or that epoch, amongst this or that people, but regarding what is the teaching of God's Word concerning these things in its last and clearest form. It is undeniably the case that we have not yet by any means obtained the final light,—perfect unveiling of all that is hidden, clearness over all that is obscure. Our knowledge here is always only what in days of old was called a pilgrims' theology (*theologia viatorum*), in contrast with the clearer knowledge which will be vouchsafed to us when we reach our

¹ Between the Old Testament and the New there lies a period of between three and four hundred years, during which the Jews were strongly influenced by foreigners,—by the Persians, and thereafter by the Greeks (from the time of Alexander the Great onward). The most important sources of knowledge we have of the intellectual life of the Jews during these centuries are the so-called Books of the Apocrypha, especially the Book of Wisdom, from which it appears that the idea of a retribution, and consequently, of a different state for the faithful and the ungodly, had begun to assume a more definite form in that period than was the case formerly. Familiar are the beautiful words of Wisdom iii. 1 : "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them." The book speaks also elsewhere of a "reward for blameless souls" (ii. 22), and says that "the righteous . . . shall be in rest" (iv. 7), and that "their hope is full of immortality" (iii. 4) ; "the righteous live for evermore ; their reward also is with the Lord" (v. 16). There is less said about the destiny of the ungodly, but there is mention of the "day of trial" (iii. 18), when the accounts of the sins of the ungodly will be cast up (iv. 20).

In Philo and in Josephus, who both lived about the time of Christ or a little later, as in other Jewish witnesses who lived about the same period, we find the doctrine of a retribution after death distinctly expressed.

true fatherland and walk no longer by faith but by sight (*theologia patriæ*). But still, in the New Testament, we possess the clearest revelation about these things that we can ever hope to have in this life. The question of a more complete revelation can never arise, but only of a progressive knowledge of its contents by continued inquiry and by growing experience of what has been revealed.

In the nature of the case it is only to be expected that much must continue to be obscure even with the light of the New Testament shining upon the subject. Among the many difficulties which stand in the way of a perfect understanding of the real state of the deceased we must particularly notice one which holds good not of some single point, but of the whole question, viz., that in so many cases it is extremely hard to decide what stage in the soul's life hereafter the individual passages in the Word of God refer to: whether it is to the state of the soul immediately after death or after doomsday (therefore in eternity), or to the intermediate state between the present dispensation and eternity, which has been designated the "thousand years' kingdom," the millennium. A glance at the voluminous literature which treats of the last things will soon show us that many expressions in Scripture, which one author refers to one of these stages, are by a second regarded as referring to one of the other two. The reason of this arises to some extent from Scripture itself; for the sacred writers seem so exclusively to have dwelt on the final completion that the eye often glanced rapidly over the intermediate stages, or at least so viewed them in the radiance of the final stage, that it becomes on that account very difficult to distinguish them from the latter.

We purpose endeavouring to ascertain the difference between what we, from Scripture, actually know of these things, and what we only with some probability can conjecture. Confusion of these two domains has occasioned much mischief, and that in more respects than one; for, on the one hand, there has been given forth as the teaching of Scripture what was only a more or less uncertain supposition, and on the other, everything has been regarded as uncertain supposition. The former error has doubtless usually been the

cause of the latter; for when more acute readers have discovered that much of what was given forth as certain has been really only assumption, they have thereby been induced to regard everything as uncertain, and to doubt whether it is actually possible to come to a trustworthy knowledge of anything concerning the life that follows death or the future of God's kingdom. And so most assuredly a great responsibility lies on those who assert with the utmost assurance that what is uncertain is a revealed truth, and thereby lead many to doubt everything. Here the Lord's words hold good: "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 28).

Along with what is absolutely certain and reliable we must give a supreme place to the assurance that the souls of believers immediately after death enter into bliss and enjoy fellowship with God; for that is manifestly the indubitable teaching of the New Testament. And we ought to thank God that this is so. For however much may appear to us uncertain, yet our happiness is not essentially interfered with when we are quite sure of this one thing, that by a blissful death we shall go home to God, where it is good to be.

In our living fellowship with Christ we have, as formerly indicated, the pledge of the life eternal,—indeed, we possess it already in its beginning. "Everlasting life," in the scriptural sense, is certainly not—as we shall learn more particularly—merely a life which is continued infinitely; it is first and foremost a life of a characteristic nature, a free, unfettered fellowship with God, the source of life, effected through "the Son of the living God." Fellowship with the Son is everlasting life; therefore it is said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). "God hath given to us eternal life" (so that we have it already), "and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 11, 12). Consequently, "no murderer hath eternal life

abiding in him" (1 John iii. 15). "God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John iv. 9). Therefore, in spiritual fellowship with the Son we have everlasting life, and therewith also bliss, and so the Lord likewise blesses believers in this present life (Matt. v. 3-11). Life and bliss have had their beginning; it is merely the continuation that comes after death, and of this continuation the beginning is the certain pledge.

Of this continuation the Lord speaks when He promises His children that they shall come to Him and be where He is. It is to this He refers when He says: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be" (John xii. 26). "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory" (John xvii. 24). The meaning of this passage can certainly only be that those who have believed on Him, from the very moment of their death go to be with Him and behold His heavenly glory. And the same truth is likewise contained in His words of consolation to the disciples in John xiv. 2, 3: "In My Father's house are many mansions: . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." When He at His ascension—the exaltation of His human nature to the divine seat at the right hand of the Father—had placed the crown on His atoning work, by carrying the blood of atonement into the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. ix. 24), He would by the effusion of the Spirit visit His followers, and thereafter at death bring each one home; for now the mansion was prepared for them and the road was made. There would be little consolation in such a saying if it had only been a promise of a return at the last day. And why should the Lord require so long a time to prepare the mansions? For that purpose He really needed no time at all; but inasmuch as the residence of His followers there was to be a dwelling with Him as a brother, He must Himself first make His ascension,—and therein consisted the preparation of the mansions.

In full accordance with these promises of the Lord are the other utterances of the New Testament in the main.

The Saviour Himself finished His life with the cry, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46), since He was assured that His soul at death would go to the Father. And that passage was certainly a passage to Paradise, where the penitent thief would be with Him also (Luke xxiii. 43), and assuredly not he alone, but all who like him died in living faith in the Saviour. And when the proto-martyr Stephen "fell asleep," the words that issued from his lips were these: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 59). And he had reason to speak thus with full confidence, for he had already seen "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii. 55, 56). That was something more than a reference to a bliss that was first to come after thousands of years,—at the last day.

That the great Apostle to the Gentiles also regarded the Lord's promise in the same way appears clearly from several of his Epistles. He has "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23). He is "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). Hence, to him "departing" or "being absent from the body" stands in indissoluble connection with being "with Christ," being "present with the Lord." As soon as the one takes place the other follows it immediately. Here there is no suggestion of a waiting through long centuries. The unbelieving may maintain that Paul was mistaken in this hope, but it is impossible to deny that he entertained it, yea, that he was perfectly convinced that at his death he would go home to be with his Lord.

We must therefore continue to maintain that it is undoubtedly the teaching of the New Testament, that the believer at his death immediately goes home to Jesus in heaven, just as we have already seen that according to the witness of Jesus even the Old Testament believers entered into a place of bliss, which was called "Abraham's bosom," where they were comforted (Luke xvi. 22-25).

Less clear are the utterances of Scripture about the fate of unbelievers immediately after death; for nearly all the passages which threaten them with a fearful retribution,

eternal perdition, connect this with the doom at the last day, concerning which we shall have more to say at a later stage.

However, we do not lack indications of what will happen to them. Just as in the living fellowship of believers with the Lord we have the surest warrant for their bliss after death, so, on the other hand, is unbelief a guarantee of perdition. "He that hath not the Son, hath not life," we have already noticed, and such an one is in death both before and after the death of the body. And so, too, it is expressly said: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). Nothing new really happens to him. He continues to be in the same darkness and under the same wrath as before; only, he now feels it much more keenly because conscience has been awakened. But "not to see life," and to be under "the wrath of God," is to be lost, damned. That the state into which unbelievers enter at death is an actual torture, torment, which may be compared to flames of fire, and burning thirst without anything with which to quench it, far away from God and the blessed who are in Abraham's bosom, we see clearly enough from the parable of Dives (Luke xvi. 16-31), who evidently speaks of what the unbelieving have to expect immediately after death, not merely after the judgment. Dives had forsaken God in life, and therefore he must continue to live without God after death. That which happens to him is only the natural consequence of his own conduct and disposition. Of him and of every one who dies in impenitence and unbelief, that can be said which was so significantly said of Judas, he went "to his own place" (Acts i. 25), *i.e.* the place which corresponded to his life and state.

That, then, is briefly what we can learn with certainty from Scripture on this point. It may seem little, but it is weighty and important enough. It tells of infinite happiness and inexpressible woe. It is sufficient to cause our hearts to quiver in blissful expectation, or to tremble for the wrath that is to come.

It might seem as if such a separation between believers and unbelievers immediately after death must be the final

adjustment, and that thus there could be no place for any intermediate state!

Yet that is not the case. We must, however, before we proceed to prove this, say a few words about what we understand by the intermediate state.

The expression is ambiguous. It may, in the first place, be used only with respect to time (purely temporary), consequently to the interval between death and the resurrection. In this sense no one can deny the propriety of the expression, since there manifestly is such an interval. In the next place, it may designate a state of absolute suspense and colourlessness in which there is neither joy nor torment, but only a waiting for the last day, which will decide what the destiny of each one is to be. But of an intermediate state in this sense the New Testament knows nothing, although, as we have seen, the Old Testament idea of the kingdom of death would essentially suit this conception of the intermediate state. And again, the expression may be used of a state of relative suspense wherein neither bliss nor woe has yet attained its final completion. It is in this last sense we here use the word.

That there really is such a state, or, in other words, that the state which the soul enters at death is not the final, perfect, and conclusive one, appears to us to follow necessarily for several reasons, which we shall now attempt more particularly to point out. In the first place, it is important to remember that the souls of the deceased cannot be said yet to have really entered into eternity. They have left not time, but the earthly life. The thousands of years in which they must still await the conclusion of the earthly course of the kingdom of God is also a "time," for it runs parallel with the future history of the Church on the earth, which incontestably belongs to time, and as such can be measured off into definite portions (days, months, years, centuries, etc.), whilst eternity is incalculable by any measure, since the infinite can neither be divided nor measured. That is of importance, for where there is still time there appears to be no metaphysical obstacle to the possibility of changes which, according to human experience, certainly demand time as their necessary presupposition.

In the second place, we must not forget that it is not the whole man which by a blissful death enters into the joy of the Lord. It is only the soul. The body still rests in the grave. It has returned to the earth from which it sprang, but the promise is not yet fulfilled, that from the earth it shall rise again. And so the bliss is only half bliss,—not, indeed, that the soul is only half blessed, but that it is only the half-man, the soul, which is blessed. This will not have any direct influence on the sense of welfare on the part of the soul; for if it is blest it must feel itself to be perfectly happy, to be quite satisfied, to be free from sorrow, to be troubled by no want. But in so far as we think of the activity of the soul we cannot set aside the fact that the body is the instrument given by God through which the soul works. And so we cannot well imagine the soul properly developing its energy in any work in the future life before the whole man stands there perfectly complete in glorified form; and that will first take place on the great and glorious resurrection day.

We must also remember that the individual Christian does not live his life for himself, in absolute solitude. He is a member of the Holy Church and congregation of God. But this Church is *one*, scattered over all lands, distributed over all the ages of history, in heaven and on earth. It is one body, with Christ as head. All the individual believers are members of that body and mutually members of each other (1 Cor. xii. 12–27; Eph. v. 23). And so, too, there is such a fellow-feeling, such a sympathy between them, that when the one member suffers the others suffer likewise (1 Cor. xii. 26). In other words, for the full and perfect blessedness of the individual it is necessary that all his brethren should be perfectly blessed too. This seems to imply that all believers—God's whole Church—must be gathered in to God before the individual can attain to the fulness of bliss and glory. And that, indeed, appears actually to be the teaching of God's Word. The Old Testament believers undoubtedly went to Abraham's bosom and were blessed there; but for their perfecting, they must still wait for us, the New Testament Church, "that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. xi. 40). The New Testament Church on earth waits and longs that the

fulness of the Gentiles may come into it and that its number be made up; and then only "shall the end come" and therewith its perfecting (Matt. xxiv. 14). And the Church triumphant in heaven waits that all who belong to the Church militant on earth may be gathered in to God, when all its members shall attain their final perfecting by the resurrection of the body and the transforming of nature. And so, too, there was granted to the martyrs before God's throne in heaven, who asked why the Lord delayed the judgment (did not come again for the last judgment), this answer, that they must wait until the number of their fellow-servants and their brethren should be completed (Rev. vi. 9-11).

That the kingdom of God, then, is one organism, one body, is possibly the great reason why the individual cannot arise and so be perfected before the earthly course of that kingdom has been brought to an end (the general resurrection), or at any rate practically ended (the first resurrection); and this is a strong argument against the doctrine of a successive resurrection (a resurrection by degrees, gradually, through all time), of which we shall have more to say later on.

And still further, we must not overlook the fact that God's Word everywhere connects the final decision of man's eternal destiny with the last judgment, a matter which we hope to substantiate from Scripture when we come to that point. Now, this is quite irreconcilable with the view that all is over at death, and that this is the real and final decision for eternity. It is evident also that the men of old, who generally held this view, were unable to find any satisfactory explanation of the judgment. If the decision has taken place at death, the last judgment becomes an event of comparative unimportance, merely a solemn publication of a sentence that has already been passed long ago. But that, in truth, is not the conception which the Word of God connects with the general judgment—when the day shall clearly reveal every man's work of what sort it is (1 Cor. iii. 13), when the books shall be opened (Rev. xx. 12), and the Judge shall reward every man according as his work has been (Rev. xxii. 12). If the final judgment is to have its due, then we are

bound to assume that what goes before it is a state of relative (partial and comparative) suspense (in other words, an "intermediate state"), so that there really is something left to decide at that great day of decision.

Against this view there has certainly been quoted, but with injustice, the passage, Hebrews ix. 27, in which it is said that after death comes the judgment; for the connection with verse 28 shows that there is reference here also to the final judgment at Christ's advent. Indeed, the matter is so represented that our death and judgment respectively correspond to Christ's atoning death and to His manifestation as the Judge of the world at the last day.

For these reasons we are compelled to assume that between death and judgment there is an intermediate state, not merely in time, but also in condition; and we shall now proceed to discuss the various questions that naturally arise regarding the life which souls lead in this state; but at the outset we acknowledge that our answers to these questions on several points can only assume the form of more or less probable suppositions.

Among the many questions which suggest themselves the moment we enter upon this obscure domain, we shall here refer to the relation of souls to themselves in the intermediate state, their relation to God, to the body, to other souls in the same state, to the world, to their friends on earth, to their own past, to the conceptions of time and space, and to the possibility of changes which are conditioned by these,—all questions which are easy enough to ask, but in some cases difficult enough to answer.

To many it may possibly seem somewhat strange to begin by asking about the soul's relation to itself. But that is a question of the very greatest moment, and in a certain sense it is the foundation of all the others. By the soul's relation to itself we chiefly think of its self-consciousness, and it is readily seen that if that is not maintained,—in other words, if we cannot suppose that even after death the soul has a clear consciousness of itself,—then it can neither have any consciousness of God nor any apprehension whatever; in short, it can have no personal life. In such an event, the soul lies

as in a trance, a deep sleep, from which the resurrection morn will first awake it. And so it is necessary first and foremost to settle this question before we proceed further.

Now, it is absolutely necessary that at the very beginning we should completely reject any thought of such a non-consciousness, since from God's Word we have shown that the soul of the believer immediately after death enjoys the contemplation of God, whilst the unbeliever is in torment and trouble, as the rich man was; and this manifestly takes self-consciousness for granted, for without it both bliss and torment are inconceivable. But since several of the most prominent men of the Church have assumed such a soul-sleep, a state of trance, of unconsciousness, between death and the resurrection, it will be desirable here to consider this idea somewhat carefully, and to show that it depends on a misunderstanding both of the whole nature of the case and of the Scripture passages on which it relies.

Even Tertullian (*ob.* 220) is acquainted with this notion of a soul-sleep, but rejects it with the remark that the soul never sleeps in this life, for it is only the body that sleeps. That the soul is awake even when the body sleeps is proved by the dreams we have. Then he draws attention to the fact that the soul's well-being in this life is frequently seen to be so independent of the body's sufferings that it can experience the highest joy whilst the body is being tortured and done to death (*e.g.*, in the case of the martyrs); and in that case it must also be able to enjoy bliss even when the body is dead. Still further, he points out that the soul on this earth of ours has its inner world of activity, its thought-life, even when that does not reveal itself in any external action for which it needs the body as its instrument. And then he points out very clearly that no injustice is chargeable to God if the soul attains to bliss before the body, since its thoughts and determinations have always preceded the body's acts.¹

In a coarser form than that with which Tertullian was acquainted, the same thought appears amongst a heretical party in Arabia in the time of Origen (in the third century), when the so-called Thnetpsychitæ, whom he refuted, asserted

¹ Tertull., *De anima*, 58.

that the soul died with the body and became disintegrated like it, in order eventually at the last day to be awakened to life again along with it.¹

But although this idea of a soul-sleep was rejected by the Church and its leaders, yet it was constantly reappearing not only amongst individuals, but even amongst some sects, such as the Armenians. And towards the close of the Middle Ages there were not a few so-called Psychopannychians (Hypnopsychitæ, believers in the soul-sleep) to be found, amongst whom was numbered a pope (John XXII.).

In the Reformation age it was particularly the so-called Re-baptizers (Anabaptists) who resuscitated this error, and against them Calvin wrote a book, *De Psychopannychia*, dated 1534, on the subject of the night-sleep of the soul. Luther, however, seems for a time to have fallen into the error, for he expressed himself in a letter to his friend Amsdorf in 1522 in the following way: "I am inclined to agree with you in the view that the souls of the righteous sleep, and do not know where they are until the Judgment Day." And he thinks that those who were raised from the dead by Christ or His apostles just prove this, for "they awoke as from a sleep, not knowing where they had been." Yet he thinks that there were exceptions, since the greatest men of God (like Abraham, Moses, and Elijah) were at once permitted to feel and taste bliss, and the most ungodly at once experienced torment. But as a general rule he says: "It is highly probable that all—with very few exceptions—sleep a sleep of unconsciousness" (*dormire insensibiles*). In his exposition of Genesis xxv. and xlix. he again returns to this question, and expresses himself somewhat more minutely. He compares the life of the soul, until the judgment, to that of the foetus in the mother's womb, but yet he says that this is only a rude and imperfect representation (*similitudo satis crassa*). Souls no doubt sleep, but they "are yet in a certain sense also awake," so that they "can hear the converse of the angels and of God." Therefore it is probable enough that they are right who think that Luther only in form expressed himself as partial to a soul-sleep, but that he did

¹ Euseb., *H. E.* vi. 37.

not really hold that belief itself.¹ He only wished to emphasize that the soul enjoys the same refreshing rest as a sleeper, and that it, as it were, sleeps away all the misery of the earthly life in the interval between the death and the judgment of the individual.

In post-Reformation times several have come forward in defence of the doctrine of a soul-sleep, not only in England but also in Germany, and amongst them men like the celebrated Archbishop Whately. The Irvingites likewise incline to this view. The reasons that have been adduced in favour of this doctrine are practically these:—

1. Since the body is the organ of the soul it is inconceivable that the soul can do any work without the body. But a soul without activity is a soul in a trance, in a sleeping state; for the activity of the soul is the life of thought and of consciousness, of which the brain is the necessary instrument.

On this argument, however, we do not require to dwell here, for we have already shown that it is based on the error of confusing the worker with his machine. There is only this truth in it, that when the worker has to do his work without his machine he must work in another way than formerly. Thus we must also suppose that the thought-work of the soul after death is different from its work when it was in the body; but it does not necessarily follow that it ceases to work, *i.e.* think, feel, and will.

2. Of the dead it is often said in the New Testament that they are asleep (Matt. ix. 24; John xi. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 20; 1 Thess. iv. 13); and instead of recording that a Christian died, sacred writers say that he fell asleep (Acts vii. 60). This might seem to prove that the soul at death enters into a state of sleep. But a closer consideration of these passages will soon show us that the purpose of such expressions is merely to allow the consolatory resurrection hope to cast its light upon the deathbed in order to deprive death of its terror. It is only to be compared with a calm

¹ Vide K. Ströbel in his article, "Zur Eschatologie," in *Zeitschrift für luth. Th. u. Kirche*, 1885, pp. 463-65. Compare also Del. *Psychologie*, 2nd ed., 419, 420.

and peaceful slumber which offers the weary traveller the anxiously longed-for repose. And since this rest of the body in the grave is merely to last till the judgment, and that is only a brief moment compared with eternity, then the death of the believer is, as it were, a night-sleep from which he will awake again at the dawn of eternity. The expressions evidently refer chiefly to the body which is laid in the grave, as in a sleeping-room. It is never said that the soul fell asleep, nor indeed that the body did so, but the dying person; yet in such a way that the figure chosen eminently suits the bodily part of him.

3. Appeal is made to several passages of the Old Testament where the words seem to imply that the dead are destitute of all knowledge (Eccles. ix. 4, 10). But we have already seen that such expressions are due to the Old Testament's imperfect revelation about the life hereafter, and therefore that these passages are without significance in helping to answer the question as to what is the real state of the case.

4. Still further, it has been thought that several expressions in Paul's Epistles hint at such a view. Only thus, it has been said, can we explain how the apostle as a rule directs attention to the judgment day, when he wishes to comfort believers or threaten the ungodly, and how he occasionally appears to speak as if he himself might live to see the day (*cf.* 1 Thess. iv. 15 R.V.: "We that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep"); for if they slept during the whole interval, it was really not worth while taking it into account then, and they therefore at once turned their eyes to the advent of Christ. But, on the other hand, it must be objected that the apostle, although not usually, speaks about Christ coming again and taking him at the last day, but that when he leaves the body he will at once "be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8); and when he designates this as "far better" than life here (Phil. i. 23), where he stood in blessed living fellowship with the Lord, he cannot possibly have regarded the life immediately beyond death as a state of unconsciousness; for in such an

event that state would not be better but worse than the believer's life on earth. When in 1 Thessalonians iv. 15-17 he appears to number himself with those who will be alive when the Lord comes again, this is because at that point he desires to speak about the two classes which the Lord will find when He comes: the dead who will be raised up and the living who will be transformed. But as he did not know how far distant the day of the Lord might still be, and so could not say whether he or any of his hearers would live to see it, it was natural that he should place himself among the living, since he was writing as a living man to men who were living.

That the great decision was generally referred to the final judgment is true; yet the reason of this is not to be sought in a soul-sleep, but in the relative inconclusiveness which distinguishes the intermediate state, as has been formerly indicated.

5. Finally, it has been said that they who have been raised from the dead have given us no information about their experiences. That—it has been alleged—finds a natural explanation if their souls have been unconscious whilst they were away from their bodies; for then, of course, they could not observe anything, and so they would have nothing at all to tell. It must be confessed that this silence of theirs is strange. But it may very well have had an altogether different reason from that given; for, on the one hand, it is not so very certain that God had given them permission to tell what they had seen (2 Cor. xii. 4), and, on the other hand, the natural explanation may be, that the observations made by the soul, whilst it happened to be in a domain altogether different from the usual one, were forgotten when it returned to the earth again. We all know what happens with dreams. What the soul experiences during these may be as clear as day to us until we awake; but then we often forget everything, and only remember that we have dreamt of something.¹ And such may have been the case with the dead who were restored to life.

¹ Something similar is in a still higher degree the case when one awakes from a somnambolic state. Cf. on this point C. du Prel, *Det dolda Själslivet*, ii. pp. 38-52.

At all events, the conception of a soul-sleep is absolutely irreconcilable with the Word of God. We only need to remember the parable of Dives and the beggar. The rich man evidently had a distinct feeling of his misery and Lazarus of his bliss, and it is specially clear that in the case of Dives his consciousness of life was clear and vivid (*cf.* also Rev. vi. 9–11).

It stands therefore established that we shall not lie in a trance between death and doomsday, but have our full consciousness. That, too, is the foundation and presumption for the whole life of the soul in the intermediate state; for without self-consciousness no activity of the soul is possible. And we now pass on to consider more closely how this life of the soul must be thought to vary according to the different aspects and in the different conditions which can have any significance for the soul-life in the intermediate state.

Next after the soul's relation to itself comes its relation to God. But this we may be said to have already dealt with when at the outset we dwelt upon what we knew with certainty about the state of the soul after death; for amongst the certain things was this, that the believer's soul by a blissful death goes home to God, and the unbeliever's soul is cast off from the presence of God, relegated to a place far away from Him, as in the case of Dives.

However, Scripture does not give us very much information on this point, for it mostly speaks of bliss only in its final form after the resurrection. Yet we do learn from the Revelation that the souls of the saved, even before the judgment and the resurrection, praise and glorify God (Rev. v. 8–13, vi. 9, 10). And behind this ascription of praise undoubtedly there lies a new and higher knowledge of God which attunes the souls to praise and thanksgiving. If it is life eternal to know God (John xvii. 3), then must this knowledge, which begins already here in time, certainly be continued in heaven. And when the Apostle Paul calls our knowledge of God in this life only partial knowledge, and adds: "But then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12), there can be no doubt that this "then" in his opinion signifies the whole future from death onward, a future of which the period from death to doomsday—there-

fore the intermediate state—forms the first section. Consequently we conclude that our new knowledge of God will begin in the intermediate state. And it will be new not merely in its extent, an increased knowledge, but in its nature. It will be a new method of knowing which will resemble God's knowledge of us, for we are to know, even as we are known, by God. And how does God know? Not certainly by experience, bit by bit; not logically, by drawing conclusions from the familiar to the unfamiliar, or from the general rule to the particular case; but by sight, intuitively, since that which is to be known stands before the eye in its completeness all at once. That is what Scripture calls "sight" when it speaks of our present state in contrast with the state hereafter. "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7). That is what it calls seeing "face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

That this new knowledge of God on the part of the saved begins immediately after death, moreover, follows directly from the nature of the case, even apart from the evidence already adduced from Scripture. Now, what makes our knowledge of God on earth so dim is partly that we see Him only at a distance through the telescope of revelation, partly that the coarse sensual body, which binds us to the earth and our surroundings, clouds the sight of the soul, and partly that sin has darkened our spiritual eyes. All this is changed at death. Then we shall no longer see God at a distance, but we shall dwell with Him; then we shall no longer have an earthly body to trammel the soul's free action. Then finally, sin, by a blissful death, will be quite eradicated, and will no longer obscure the vision of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 23). That this new knowledge of God must also infinitely increase love to Him is self-evident. Love and knowledge must here stand in the most living correlation to each other.

In the last section of our exposition ("the life eternal") we shall return to this knowledge of God that is possessed by the saved; but still we must at this point assert that an essential ingredient of bliss is this new knowledge of God; for, as has been pointed out, we maintain that this begins already at death because all the conditions for it are then

already present. An emancipated spirit must be able to know God who is a spirit, at least to such an extent as a finite creature can know the infinite God. Of course we do not thus deny that this knowledge may be progressive,—a point to which we shall return. It is quite a different matter that the human mind for perfect knowledge needs the new body as its organ. But there is no great hurry for this. Of the old sin-smitten creation the majority have already had enough; and the new creation will first come into existence at the same time as the human mind in its resurrection body gets a new instrument for knowledge of it.

Another question which has been the object of much difference of opinion between believing theologians is that which concerns the relation of the soul to the body in the intermediate state.

Has it any body? And if it has any body in the intermediate state, in what relation does that stand to its earthly body, to the resurrection body, and to Christ's glorified body? That question is the most momentous of all that men have put and in various ways have tried to answer.

The idea that the soul even in the intermediate state has a body is an old one in the Church. Originally it was connected with the conception that the soul as such has a body inseparable from itself, or that the soul itself is essentially of a corporeal nature. This is the case with Tertullian, who distinctly maintains that the soul has a corporeal nature, with shape and limits, with length and breadth, and a definite form, which practically correspond with those of the body. This, he thinks, appears even from the story of its creation; for when God had formed man's body from the earth, He breathed the soul into it; and since it was to put life in the whole body, it must also permeate the whole, and in that way naturally come to shape itself according to the body. The body became, as it were, the mould in which the soul was cast. That such is actually the case he would like to prove from the fact that a Christian prophetess (evidently a Montanist) of his time had seen the soul in human form, yet so that its substance

was transparent and of the colour of the air (*Aërii coloris et forma per omnia humana*). It also quite agrees with this, he thinks, that souls in the intermediate state, when they have neither their earthly body nor their resurrection body, are yet spoken of as possessing bodily organs. There is mention of Abraham's bosom, the rich man's tongue, and the finger of Lazarus.¹

Almost the same idea we meet in his somewhat older contemporary Irenæus, who says: "The Lord teaches us that souls not merely continue to exist (after death), but that they even preserve the same form as had the body from which they received their shape."²

That is only an example of how the two men who have been called the "Realists of the Ancient Church" regarded the matter.

In recent times there has generally been a departure from the idea that the soul actually possesses a certain corporeality. But, on the other hand, men have not been willing to give up the view that in the intermediate state the soul possesses some kind of body. The nature and origin of this temporary body they try to explain in many different ways.

Some suppose that the soul makes for itself a "phenomenal corporeality," which, however, is not material, but an apparent image of its own, in accordance with the shape it has taken during its residence in the mortal body. This body will therefore be, they think, a self-revelation of the ethical content which it has acquired during the earthly life, whether it be good or bad (such is the opinion of Delitzsch).³

Others (*e.g.* Güder⁴) hold that the soul, even in this life, has an "inner body," which is the shape, independent of the substance of the outer body—"a law of the body in the soul"; in other words, the form according to which the vital force through every change of matter always anew builds up the body. That which, in the strictest sense, actually

¹ Tertull., *De anima*, c. 9. Cf. also chap. vii., where he asserts that the soul of Dives could not be tormented in flames if it had not a body.

² Iren., *Contra Hæc*. ii. 34. 1.

³ Delitzsch's *Biblische Psychologie*, pp. 426-38.

⁴ *Hades*, pp. 316 *et seq.*

belongs to the soul accompanies it beyond the grave, and forms, so to speak, the framework of a body, which it makes for itself in the intermediate state by taking up and utilizing suitable elements from the regions where it has its abode after death. Thus a bodily organism is framed which not only is its temporary dress until the resurrection, but is in reality the resurrection body itself, since that is only the fully ripened fruit of this new development.¹

Others suppose that in our earthly body—shut up and hidden in it—there is a delicate nerve-body which forms its real kernel, and which accompanies the soul to the other life and there forms its temporary body, which some again, in one way or another, place in connection with the resurrection body, or even with Christ's glorified body.²

And still further, there are some who believe in such a temporary corporeality for the soul in the intermediate state without, however, venturing to explain wherein it consists or whence it springs. Amongst these are Bishop Martensen. It is quite true that he strongly maintains that the intermediate state is a spiritual kingdom, but, all the same, he thinks we must assume that the souls in it have a certain corporeality. "In the spirit kingdom the soul cannot be thought to be quite natureless." This he partly deduces from 2 Corinthians v. 2–4, where, according to his opinion, reference is made to a "clothing" between the "unclothing" (death) and the "clothing upon" (resurrection), and partly, he thinks, we are driven to suppose that the future corporeality, or resurrection of the flesh, is made ready by a natural evolution. Therefore he believes it is necessary to suppose a certain clothing of the soul, or, as he also calls it, "an interim corporeality."³

¹ Nearly allied to this is Gerlach's view. He distinguishes sharply between corporality and corporeality (*Körperlichkeit*), for he maintains that the former is an organism, the latter presupposes a material substance. In our present body these are both united; but only the former is essentially connected with the soul and accompanies it even after death (*Die letzten Dinge*, pp. 84–101).

² Vide Kliefoth's *Eschatologie*, p. 57 et seq. Cf. also Splitgerber, *Tod, Fortleben und Auferstehung*, pp. 57–84 (4th ed.).

³ Martensen, *Dogmatik*, p. 276.

Now what are we to say about these different conceptions of "an interim corporeality"?

So far as we have been able to grasp the question, we believe it must be said that there is scarcely any tenable ground for taking such "an interim corporeality" for granted. It is only a vague surmise which its supporters have doubtless endeavoured to substantiate partly by arguments and partly by the evidence of Scripture.

As concerns the former, on the one hand they have thought that the soul could not exist, or at least could not act, apart from some kind of body; and on the other hand they have regarded it as improbable that the resurrection body should come in such a very off-hand way. But is that contention sound? God and the angels are pure spirits, without any body,¹ but is that any obstacle to their activity? Certainly there is this difference, that men are created with bodies and the angels without bodies; but man's body seems to be given to effect relations with the sense-world. And when the soul withdraws from this world what use has it for a body? It does not seem to have any use for it until it is again placed in a new sense-world, the new heaven and the new earth, the glorified creation, and then will it get its glorified body which is the proper instrument to effect its connection with that world. And why should not God suddenly, in a moment, be able to form this new body? Is it not the very conception which Scripture gives us of the resurrection, that it is a miracle which will take place in an instant, not the result of a long natural process of evolution in which the "interim corporeality" will form the connecting-link between the old earthly body and the resurrection body? It is all to happen "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible" (1 Cor. xv. 52). Here there is no place for any evolution which should gradually form the resurrection body out of the one laid in the grave by the help of an "interim corporeality."

¹ We suppose that very few will agree with Tertullian: "Who will deny that God is body even if He is a Spirit?" (*Adv. Prak.* c. 7, where, however, he at once adds that this spiritual body is *sui generis in sua effigie*).

Of actual Scripture evidence for this idea there is very little indeed. It is quite true that appeal is made to 2 Corinthians v. 2-4, as we have indicated. But even Delitzsch, who assumes such an "interim corporeality," has to admit that he can find no support in that passage, which only speaks of the resurrection body and quite overlooks—looks over and beyond—the intermediate state, fixing the gaze on the advent of the Lord.¹ Nor are the other passages, to which appeal is made, any more convincing. They have especially made much of the souls of the saved in the Revelation being arrayed in white robes (Rev. iii. 4, 5, vi. 11, vii. 9, 13, xix. 14), and thought that those robes were an expression for their temporary bodies.² But there can scarcely be a doubt that the robes here are only a figurative designation for their purity and spotlessness. Even the priestly dress among the Jews was white, as a symbol of the purity which is demanded of everyone who shall stand before God. And those, too, are "made kings and priests unto God" (Rev. i. 6, v. 10). It must therefore naturally follow that when they were to be represented to John in a visible form it could only be in a white dress. Consequently, they have surely just as little reason to see a body here as to conclude from the angels appearing in shining white apparel that that is their body (*vide* Matt. xxviii. 3; Acts i. 10). The white dress is symbolical of purity, beatification, and victory. When the Lord was transfigured on the Mount, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow" (Mark ix. 3), and that transfiguration was just a type of what awaits His faithful disciples. That the Revelation specially uses the white robes as symbols of purity and victory appears clearly from such passages as Revelation iii. 4, 5: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." And when one of the elders in Revelation vii. 14 says of them who are arrayed in white garments, that they "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," he expressly teaches us that the

¹ Delitzsch, *loc. cit.* pp. 435-7.

² *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.* 434.

white robes are an expression for the purity which necessarily follows "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleansing us from all sin" (1 John i. 7; Heb. ix. 14; Rev. i. 5). Now this cleansing is not of a physical but of an ethical character, and, of course, does not refer to anything material, but to the soul.

Then it is argued that the dead who arose along with Christ (Matt. xxvii. 52) were seen by many, and, of course, must have had bodies; likewise that the same holds good of Moses and Elijah, who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark ix. 4). But these had already risen from their graves and had got their bodies again: Elijah had ascended alive to heaven, and must therefore be best likened to those who, at the coming of the Lord, shall be changed in a moment (1 Cor. xv. 52), and Moses had in any case died and been buried in a special manner (Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6), so that there has been considerable contention as to what really happened to his body (*cf.* Jude, ver. 9).¹

We have still to notice the report of Samuel's appearance at Endor (1 Sam. xxviii. 7-19). That, it has been thought, should show that Samuel's soul had a body, since it could be seen by living men. But does not the same hold true of the angels? These also have repeatedly appeared to mortals and in mortal guise, although Scripture most distinctly declares that they are "spirits." God puts upon them a visible form when He sends them on a mission which demands such guise.

But if the evidence of Scripture in favour of "interim corporeality" is thus untenable, yet there are, on the other hand, texts which point in the very opposite direction. Amongst these we must include the passages which distinctly designate the souls of the dead as "spirits" (Heb. xii. 23; 1 Pet. iii. 19. *Cf.* also Rev. vi. 9, where the dead are called "souls").

But, after all, there is only left the one fact, which is

¹ *Cf.* Kurtz (*Geschichte des alten Bundes*, ii. 98. 4), who maintains that the passages cited show that Moses, like Enoch and Elijah, escaped the "dissolution of the body."

certainly difficult of explanation, that in the body, along with the purely material, there is, independent of matter, a bodily structure, "a skeleton body," upon which the vital forces work. It is then natural to ask: What becomes of that structure when the soul departs and the material decays? To this, unfortunately, we can give no satisfactory answer, and we can well understand how, in order to escape this dilemma, it has been usual to assume that its purpose is simply to be the dress of the soul in the intermediate state, an assumption for which, however, as has been pointed out, no sufficiently valid reason has been given. But it must be remembered that our inability to answer the question suggested is of a purely ontological character. As a matter of fact, we cannot satisfactorily answer such a question as: What becomes of the form of a thing when the matter of it perishes? The only answer which can be given is the very old one, that besides the material world there is the world of ideas, which has just as much reality as the other. Our body's ideal pattern existed in God's Creator-thought before it was formed of material substance. And this pattern is perhaps kept by Him who created it until, at the resurrection, it is brought forth again in order to be formed of a finer, more spiritual substance, corresponding to the renewed nature generally. We shall have to return to this subject when we come to discuss the question of the resurrection and the glorified bodies of those who are permitted to share in the resurrection.

The final result at which we have arrived is therefore this, that neither from Scripture nor with other proofs has it been substantiated that the soul in the intermediate state has any body; but we must also add, at the same time, that the opposite has not been definitely established.

We next come to the question of the relation of souls to each other in the intermediate state, a question for which the answer to the previous one is not without significance; for it is clear that if it could be assumed that souls in the intermediate state possessed a visible form, which to some extent was an image of the body that was their dwelling in this life, then certainly the question of a mutual

recognition would at once be decided. But it is much more difficult to imagine how such a recognition can take place if only the unclad, disembodied spirit exists. However, mere corporeality is scarcely decisive. The eye is the mirror of the soul, and its glance conveys a different impression to different people. Why, then, cannot the soul it mirrors have its own characteristic stamp which distinguishes it from all other souls? By a man's peculiar character we do not chiefly understand his bodily appearance, but his way of thinking and feeling, his view of life and his principles, and these all belong to the soul. Why should we not recognize at least everyone into whose spiritual life we have in this world been permitted to get a glimpse? Others it will be of little moment to recognize. Such a recognition, which is of a purely spiritual kind, and is connected with spiritual characteristics, will have this advantage, that it probably will also extend to such as we have never seen in person, but from whose intellectual life we have received definite impressions. I do not think I should be likely to mistake Martin Luther, the vigorous champion of the faith; or the delicate, calm, gentle Melancthon; or impetuous Peter; or the love-filled introspective soul of John; or Paul, the strong of faith. I should know each of them by his spiritual characteristics although I have never seen any of them,—know them as the disciples knew Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. It is certainly true that not many personalities are so decidedly marked as these, but yet there is on every human soul a distinctive stamp which characterizes it.

Of course the thoughts here indicated rest on the assumption that souls on the other side of the grave do not need to communicate with each other by means of a language, but are, so to speak, transparent to each other, so that they can see into and read each other's thoughts. Is it very unreasonable to suppose this? Why in this life do we need language as a medium of communication, as a bridge on which thoughts can pass over from soul to soul? Is it not for the very reason that around every soul there is a veil of corporeality? When this is removed what is

to prevent the thought-life of the one soul from lying open to the other?

Perhaps such an idea is at the moment calculated to fill us with a kind of terror. Who at present would be willing that any other person should read all his thoughts? Now this dread is due to the fact that we all have something to conceal, something to be ashamed of, or, at any rate, something we fear others might misunderstand or take advantage of in such a way as to do us injury. But when sin disappears, this dread also disappears. Then we have nothing to be ashamed of, and no one to be afraid of. Saints ourselves, and surrounded only by saints, we can without shame and without danger show ourselves to them all just as we are. Shame, fear, envy, misunderstanding, misconception, then, belong to the old things which have passed away for ever. Every saved sinner is a miracle of grace, and as such also an object of admiration to each of his fellow-redeemed, just as he again, for his part, in the same way and in the same sense admires them.

No doubt, the case of those who die in sin and with the guilt of their unforgiven sins upon them is very different. Certainly every such individual in this life can only think with dread of his evil thoughts ever being read plainly, even if it is by those who are just as bad as himself. But this is no argument against the assumption of such a transparency of thought, for either the souls of the unsaved in Hades will have lost all sense of shame—and then it is a matter of no moment for their comfort,—or else the consciousness that they are seen through, and their vileness is laid bare to all, will be but a significant moment in the misery of their perdition. Whether the one or the other of these possibilities will come to pass is a question which we must leave undecided.

In close connection herewith stands the question: Can we imagine that souls in the intermediate state influence each other?

If the conception we have just been endeavouring to propound is correct, this question must also be answered in the affirmative. For it is impossible to think of such a

transparency in each other's thought-life without an influence being exercised on souls in a good or a bad direction, at any rate, if any development *per se* is possible in the intermediate state; and this is a question which we shall soon have to discuss carefully. Certainly it is the case that this state of the deceased is a state of intensity of feeling, but this does not exclude the contemplation of the soul-life of all God's saints exercising its ripening and increasing influence on the individual soul. Now when fellowship with believers in this present life has such an influence on the human soul which is still sinful, and therefore not so willing to learn what is good, why should fellowship with the whole host of God's saints be without any such influence on an emancipated and sinless soul? And if it is the case that evil communications corrupt good manners, how much more readily will the worst of all evil communications exercise a corrupting influence on souls which already in themselves are so prone to evil, and, moreover, are withdrawn from any counteracting good influence.

What we have said, however, must only be regarded as indicating how the case appears to us, not as definitely formulated dogma. For such we lack clear and definite scriptural proof. Scripture practically does not commit itself at all on this point. So far as Scripture is concerned, the fellowship of the saints with the Saviour is the important matter, whilst their mutual fellowship with each other is passed by as if it were of secondary importance altogether. And what is the important matter for Scripture ought to be so for us also. Yet that does not prohibit us from thinking about the subject and bringing forward more or less probable suppositions, if only we do not forget that they are merely suppositions, and do not publish them as the revealed truth of God's Word. But it must likewise be acknowledged that the statements of Scripture certainly speak more for than against the thoughts just set forth. We need not emphasize further the fact that in the Old Testament the inhabitants of the kingdom of death are in some cases represented as conversing with each other, and recognizing those they have known on earth (*vide, e.g., Isa. xiv. 4-20; Ezek. xxxii. 18-32*),

since this only shows us how at that stage of imperfect revelation they thought upon the subject. The parable of Lazarus and Dives has far more bearing on our question; for there, in the Saviour's own representation of the case, we can see a very evident reference to mutual recognition and exchange of thought. Then again, from Revelation we get the definite impression that the souls of the saved live a life of fellowship in heaven even before the resurrection, and that they therefore stand not merely in relation to God, but also in mutual relation to each other (*cf.* Rev. v. 8–10, vii. 9, 10, xiv. 1–3); for they sing praise to God in concert.

Finally, we would call to mind that the "fellowship of the saints" seems to demand a living soul-fellowship between death and judgment. If there is a spiritual fellowship among all the true disciples of Jesus, both in this life and throughout eternity, we cannot imagine this fellowship being broken off in the interval that lies between death and doomsday. That is so much less likely since the spiritual life has its root and ground in their common fellowship with God; and that that will certainly continue even after death—yea, only then for the first time will properly get its due—we have already shown to be the incontrovertible teaching of Scripture, and so such mutual fellowship seems to follow almost necessarily from this.

But the same thing also holds good of the evil; for there is likewise among them a spiritual fellowship, based upon their common relation to their prince, the devil; and we therefore do not see why that should cease at death, which no doubt brings them into a still closer relation to the common spiritual power that rules over them all. That the link connecting them here is not a common love to their lord, but the common hatred to God which they share with Satan, and have had breathed into them by him, is a subject by itself which gives no evidence of being an argument against the view we have just been endeavouring to assert.

Our belief is, we must confess, that when we have called our opinion only a supposition because it has no direct scriptural proof to rely on, yet it is a supposition which can appeal to very weighty reasons, and in the most essential

points also to such analogies from what is the teaching of God's Word as very closely approach to scriptural proof.

It is natural to ask whether we must not also consider this recognition of the soul by others, and this mutual living fellowship to be influenced by the relation in which souls have stood to each other on the earth, so that, for instance, relatives, conjugal partners, familiar friends, will there also be more closely associated with each other than with strangers. God's Word does not say anything on this subject, but it has been a general supposition among believing Christians that such will be the case, and that especially the harmony and mutual sympathy of soul which arises between familiar friends on earth will be continued also beyond the grave—a conception which has been very beautifully expressed in the well-known verse of Wexels'—

“Oh, to think I shall stand with my best-beloved friend
In the mansions above where the heavenly light streams!
To think we shall speak of the life without end,
And the life that has vanished like visions and dreams!”

No doubt it is only in the final consummation that this thought will be fully realised, but yet there is nothing to forbid our assumption that already in the intermediate state something similar can take place. If there is a meeting again, and a recognition of those who were known and loved in this life, there must also be a joy at meeting again (or sorrow if the meeting be in perdition). But we must be very careful to avoid imagining that the life in bliss contains anything of the wrong, the one-sided, the sinful, which so often insinuates itself into the most familiar relations in this life. There, at least, friendship must be without selfishness, without “a coterie-spirit,” on the part of those whom it embraces, and without envy on the part of those who stand outside of it. And the closer earthly relations in which we may have stood to individual saints must not be supposed to imply the existence of a colder relation to others from whom we have stood apart. The relation must be as between florets in the same flower-spray; some stand more closely together than others, but yet all form one large family, and have essentially the same features and the same odour. In all the saints

there is the restored image of God, the true humanity, the common characteristic, and all are bound together by the common tie of love to God.

And so far as family relations are concerned we must remember that these have both a physical and an ethical side. According to the former, they have already fulfilled their purposes; according to the latter—the inner spiritual connection, which ought to result from the former,—there is perhaps still a place for them. If this distinction is maintained it is possible to escape such sophistical questions as those of the Sadducees, who asked the Saviour, whose wife, in the resurrection, she should be who in this life had seven husbands (Matt. xxii. 23–30).

The practical side of this subject is not by any means without considerable importance. For we are very anxious to be assured that we shall both see again and know again the loved ones who have gone before, and shall live in spiritual fellowship with them, and that not merely after a long interval (after the resurrection), but immediately after death; and as we have tried to show, we have also good reason for entertaining this hope. But on the other hand, they who have not merely themselves gone to perdition but have also drawn their loved ones with them, have a double cause for dread at the thought of meeting again, and being hated by those to whom they should have been a blessing but were really a curse. It was possibly this very thought that led the rich man to dread the day when his brothers should likewise follow him to the place of torment where he himself had his abode.

Regarding the soul's relation to the world it has left, Scripture gives us no very clear information. It is a popular belief amongst nearly all heathen tribes, that the dead can return to their old dwellings and exercise on the living, and especially on their nearest kindred, an important influence for good or evil,—a view which almost everywhere in heathen lands has given rise to a more or less strongly pronounced worship of the spirits of ancestors (Animism). In our popular superstitions there are many stories about dead persons who have "reappeared." And

then, present-day spiritualists have, so to say, peopled the whole world with the spirits of the dead, who, according to their assertions, hover around us always, everywhere, in innumerable hosts.

Now what are we to say of this?

About the spiritualists we have already expressed ourselves in another connection, and tried to show that such spirit-appearances cannot summarily be denied. But on the other hand, we venture to say that probably only "outlawed spirits" appear at the spiritualists' call and interest themselves in the trifles pertaining to the affairs of this earthly life, regarding which the spiritualist mediums prefer to get information from them. A truly blessed spirit we could only imagine returning to the earth when he, like Samuel in days of old, had a definite mission to execute at God's behest, consequently a service similar to that of the angels. Moreover, Samuel felt it to be a disturbance of his blissful rest to have to return to earth, and so he asked Saul upbraidingly: "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" (1 Sam. xxviii. 15), a question which possibly should be interpreted thus: Why have you acted so as to occasion God to send me back to the earth with this message to you? It is very characteristic also, that when popular superstition speaks of ghosts it is almost invariably of such dead persons as either by reason of a crime, or because their soul is too closely attached to the earth, cannot get peace beyond the grave. And in this matter doubtless the popular instinct is not far wrong, for it is hardly possible to think of such appearances in connection with a really blessed soul's rest and peace in the presence of the Lord. The one who has quite finished his earthly course, and settled his account, has no reason for haunting former scenes.

And although so many tribes worship the spirits of their ancestors, and expect help from them, yet there is, even in this delusion, an element of truth which, in the Christian, reveals itself as devotion to the deceased. When we pay to our dead "the last respects," when we adorn their graves, when we lovingly dwell on their memory,—the cause of this is surely the idea that the bond of love that unites them to

us has not ceased at death. But the love relation is a mutual relation, a relation in which affection and returned affection meet. Therefore it presupposes that our deceased friends still think of us with love, and remember their fellowship with us. And there is nothing in God's Word to prevent us from assuming that. No doubt appeal has been made to Isaiah lxiii. 16 R.V.: "Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us,"—but unreasonably, for apart from the fact that the passage is from the Old Testament, it asserts really no more than this, that Abraham and Isaac knew nothing specially of the generation which was living in the time of the Prophet Isaiah, more than a thousand years after the patriarch's own days. And so it does not prove at all that these had forgotten their contemporaries on the earth whom they themselves had known during their lives; it only shows that they had not been able to keep up with the times on the earth; and this the prophet gives as a reason why his own contemporaries could not rely upon their help or intercession. Practically the passage is a good argument against the Catholic custom of praying to the dead saints of all ages, or at any rate of invoking their intercession. It also shows that the Roman Church is reduced to great straits when it has to explain how these saints can become acquainted with the later course of events on earth, and particularly of a petitioner's needs and desires. Now, it is said that the later arrivals are constantly bringing them information from the earth, and, so to say, keeping them *à jour* with events there (in direct contradiction to Isaiah lxiii. 16); now, that the angels are ever supplying them with news; now, that God Himself reveals everything to them, and especially makes them acquainted with the prayers of believers, and every petitioner's needs and desires. But of all this Scripture knows nothing. These are only free fancies which persons interested have ventured to give forth as absolute truths.

But even if this be the case, we dare not deny that the dead may pray for us. That is, however, a very different thing from our praying to them, or at least invoking their intercession in our special needs, as the Catholics do. For that conflicts with the Lord's own words: "Thou shalt worship

the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. iv. 10); and it likewise attributes to the deceased, as we have seen, an acquaintance with our special circumstances, which has no warrant in God's Word. But, on the other hand, their praying for us seems to be a direct consequence of the relation of the sainted dead to ourselves, of the church triumphant to the church militant. They have fought the earthly fight which we are still engaged in,—and what soldier does not think with interest of his brethren in the battle, especially if he himself has served his time with the colours and been sent home from the war? Besides, their final perfecting is dependent on the militant church on earth having completed her career. "They without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. xi. 40). When they pray for us, they pray that they may themselves be perfected.

And that they really pray for this perfecting seems manifest from several passages of Scripture. We shall only mention Revelation vi. 9–11 (where the souls of the saved pray that the end may soon come) and viii. 3, 4 (the prayers of the saints in heaven, which were offered as incense to God). Until the kingdom of Christ is completed, at His return, there is still everywhere room for the prayer, "Thy kingdom come."

But it is altogether a different question whether they also specially pray for the individuals whom they have known and been associated with in the earthly life,—for their loved ones in the widest sense. On this point the Word of God says nothing; but in any case it is natural to suppose that they do so pray, and there is nothing in Scripture to conflict with such a supposition. As certainly as the ties of blood and natural love are in accordance with God's will, and as certainly as our entrance into closer relations with some than with others during our earthly life essentially depends on the providence of God, so certainly are we unable to see why such a close relationship should at death disappear and leave not a trace behind. If it is a relation between souls, and not a mere physical connection, there is no reason for assuming that it can be forgotten by our loved ones who have fallen asleep. Even the rich

man in torment had some special solicitude for his brothers, and why should the saints forget those they hold dear? But we must likewise understand that, so far as the saints are concerned, all selfishness is removed from this relation of theirs to friends and kindred. They no longer see themselves in them; they love them no longer for their own sakes, but regard them as those whom God has placed in particularly close relation to them.

But the thought that these possibly pray for us must not be allowed to displace our Lord from His position as Intercessor; for we do know that He is our unceasing Intercessor with the Father, which is something more and better than the knowledge that God's saints pray for us, or that our beloved dead may possibly specially remember us at God's throne, although that is undoubtedly a comforting and elevating thought. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1). "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (us) (Heb. vii. 25). He is the real, the great Intercessor who alone can place His merit in the balance for us; that must never be lost from sight and memory.

Another question which we cannot quite overlook is this: In what relation do souls stand to their own past, to the events and experiences of their earthly life?

This question has actually already received an answer when we tried to show that the soul takes its full self-consciousness with it into the life beyond the grave; for in this is implied a clear consciousness that it is the self-same soul that it has always been, that the self it comprehends is the very one which has produced all its thoughts in the earthly life, and is responsible for all its longings, words, and deeds. And if that be the case, it must of necessity also remember the earthly life and its work in that life.

Besides, such a remembrance is a necessary condition to enable it to understand its own state; for whether it has come to bliss or to torment, depends on the attitude it has assumed to God's saving grace and on the consequent life it has lived, either in the work of sanctification or in the service of sin. If, therefore, the soul could

not remember its mortal life, its position would seem to be an inexplicable mystery, severed, as it then would be, from its cause. But is that conceivable, not to say probable? Certainly not. We must therefore assume that the soul retains a vivid remembrance of its own past, its whole earthly life.

With this, too, the whole evidence of Scripture perfectly accords. The rich man remembered well his five brothers, and also Lazarus, whom he recognised, even although he could merely see him "afar off." And he knew only too well that his own wretched state was due to his sinful life on earth, knew it so well that he had not a word to object when Father Abraham reminded him of this connection between his present and his past, for he said to him: "Son, remember"—he could therefore remember it—"that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

We next come to the relation of souls to time and space in the intermediate state.

It might perhaps seem as if that were of little importance so far as our subject is concerned. However, it is very far, indeed, from being without significance, especially when we look at it in connection with what we have to discuss immediately, namely, the question of the possibility of changes in the intermediate state. It is absolutely impossible for us to imagine any change which does not take place in time and space. When anything is modified and altered in form, then its different parts necessarily come to occupy a different position in space than formerly. And for such a modification there is always required time, even if the change takes place in a moment; for modification presupposes that there was a time when the changed thing was otherwise than the change has made it, therefore that its *is* can be opposed to its *was*; that is, in other words, that we have to do with a period of time which can be divided into sections (in the past and the present), however short these may be. Without this any change is inconceivable. The ideas of time and change are so closely connected with each other that time has even been designated as a "series of changes."

Certain it is, at all events, that no change is possible without time. It may be more doubtful whether we dare say the converse, that time cannot be conceived without changes, although even that—which would certainly be a direct consequence of the designation of time that has been mentioned—seems very likely, yea, almost forces itself upon our thoughts as a logical necessity, since living through a period of time seems necessarily to imply that one moves with the time that is fleeting, and such a movement is itself a change. The idea of time, then, is of great significance for the conception of change, and thereby also for the question of the possibility of changes in the intermediate state.

We therefore ask with good reason: Is there any *time* in the intermediate state? By that we do not mean "time to repent," but simply time in its general signification.

To this question the answer must be decidedly in the affirmative. A duration (*i.e.* an extension, which does not hold good of space) which has a beginning and an end is time; and that certainly is a property possessed by the intermediate state; for it begins, in the case of the individual, at his death, and ends, in the case of all, at the judgment day. Moreover, as has already been pointed out, it runs parallel with the history of God's kingdom on the earth, which through all its course moves in time and has its period of time to pass through. It is therefore really incorrect to say of the dead that they "have entered into eternity," and Scripture certainly never says so. They have in reality only entered upon a new period which, in the case of most people (*i.e.* of all those who do not die immediately before the Lord's final advent), is very much longer than their brief life on earth, lies so far separate from that, and is on the whole so different from it, that we very easily, and even quite unconsciously, come to merge it into eternity, which, however, only first enters at the last day.

Moreover, the expression "enters" is incompatible with the conception of eternity, which immediately suggests a beginning that shall have no end, therefore a relation which in a manner lies on the boundary between the ideas of

time and eternity, since it both includes something that is characteristic of time (viz., that it has a beginning) and something that is characteristic of eternity (viz., endlessness, eternity *a parte post*, as the ancients said), a fact to which we shall return when we come to treat of the state that follows the judgment. Here it is only our duty to show that whatever may be true of the state after the judgment, it is certainly incontrovertible that the intermediate state is a period of time, belongs to time, and not to eternity.

Not less certain is it that, so far as the intermediate state is concerned, there is a warrant for speaking of space. No doubt it is the case that in that "kingdom of intensity" more depends on the state than on the place; the question is more *How?* than *Where?* But even the latter will still claim its due. Every creature—whether spirit or body—must necessarily occupy its distinct place in space. Only the infinite God can be everywhere present. But of disembodied human souls, in this respect, the same holds good as of the angels, that they are "finite spirits." But that which in its nature is limited has also in space its definite limits, occupies a definite place great or small. We are quite ignorant regarding how much space a human soul requires, or with what celerity it can move from place to place. That does not concern us further here. But what, at the outset, we wish to establish is only this, that it is a misunderstanding to suppose that when we have to do with disembodied souls there is no warrant for speaking of their place of abode, because their nature is supposed to exclude any determination of locality.

After thus having pointed out that the question about the abode of souls is not excluded by their want of a body, since it has its warrant in their finiteness, we ask: Where, then, are we to seek for this abode of theirs?

As concerns the blessed, we have already shown that, according to the New Testament, at death they go home to God (*vide* p. 115 *et seq.*). It is never said that they go to the kingdom of death. And so the only question left to ask is: Where, then, is God? To this there may be three answers. According to His real nature as God infinite, He is every-

where. As the God of grace, He is in His means of grace, in His Church, and in the hearts of all its members. And then in His glory, He is present in heaven. Since all men are with Him as the One who is present everywhere, and all believers are also with Him as the God of grace, then the home-going of these to Him at death can only mean that they are removed to His glory in heaven, just as Stephen also at his death "saw the heavens open to receive him." It is manifestly also this abode of the blessed in heaven that the Lord designates as Paradise when He says to the malefactor: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43), a point we shall demonstrate when we come to the descent of Christ into hell. It was also to this place that Paul was caught up (2 Cor. xii. 2-4). Here is "the general assembly of the first-born," here are "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 22, 23; cf. Rev. ii. 7).

But then, where is heaven? That we do not know; we can only say that heaven now is where God reveals Himself in His glory to His saints (angels and human souls). Any further localizing of it is impossible for us. Men with glowing imaginations have naturally in fancy located the place in one or other of the many millions of brilliant orbs with which the world of space is filled; but that is only the free play of fancy, which has no support in God's Word, and for which no convincing reasons can be given.

About the abode of the unsaved, the Word of God merely says that they go to Hades, which is generally rendered in the Authorised Version of our Bible by "hell." The word Hades is of purely heathen origin, borrowed from the Greek mythology. It signifies "the unseen," and was primarily the name of the god of the under-world, to whom the pale, impotent shades of the dead were supposed to betake themselves, almost like the "hel" of Scandinavian mythology, to which our word "hell" is closely related. Later, by a contraction of the phrase ("Hades," for "the abode of Hades"), it was also employed to designate the name of the place where Hades was supposed to rule, the under-world. And when, two centuries before our Saviour's time, the Old Testament was rendered from Hebrew into Greek, the translators could

not find any Greek word better than *Hades* with which to render *Sheol*. And so Hades, in the Septuagint, came to have the same significance as the old Hebrew word *Sheol*. In the same way it passed over into the Greek New Testament, the language of which was to some extent influenced by the Greek translation of the Old Testament. But into this there entered the significant difference, that Hades is not, like the Old Testament *Sheol* and Hades in the Septuagint, used as a common designation for the abode of all the dead (saved and unsaved), but only as the name of the place of torment of the latter. It was here that Dives, after his death, awoke ("lift up his eyes," Luke xvi. 23); but it is not said that "Abraham's bosom," where he saw Lazarus afar off, was part of Hades, as many have maintained. It has no doubt been said that since the rich man could see it, it must have belonged to the same regions as his own place of abode. But quite apart from the fact that it is part of the nature of a parable to bring distant objects closer together when the idea of the parable demands it,—and that is the case here, since the inhabitants of both of these places are represented as conversing with each other,—it is stated that he saw Abraham and Lazarus "afar off," and none of us knows how far a disembodied soul can see or its communications of thought can reach. Besides, it is possibly but an element in the misery of the lost that they can see into the bliss which they have forfeited, and there is therefore nothing unreasonable in the supposition that their abode and that of the blessed in reality may actually be not so very far away from each other. It is enough that between them both "there is a great gulf fixed" over which there is no passage (Luke xvi. 26), and that the difference in state between the inhabitants of the two places is so vast that the one is "tormented" whilst the other is "comforted" (Luke xvi. 25). It is this that is the characteristic feature of the New Testament as contrasted with the Old, where there is only mention of one place (*Sheol*) and one state in which there is neither comfort nor torment. That the difference depends only on the difference of the stage at which revelation had arrived we have previously endeavoured to prove (*vide* pp. 109–13).

Against this view of Hades as the abode in the intermediate state of all who are unsaved, and of them alone, reference has been made to Philippians ii. 10, where it is said that even those "under the earth" shall one day bow the knee to the Saviour. These, it is asserted, can only be the souls in Hades, and the redeemed must also be there, for one cannot say that the unsaved will bow the knee to Christ unless he assumes that there is time for repentance after death. However, a closer consideration of this passage will soon show us that it cannot be employed as a refutation of the many very clear passages already cited, which indubitably teach that believers, by a blessed death, go home to God in heaven. For, in the first place, the passage, as every honest exegete must admit, is very obscure, and it is not a worthy mode of interpretation to explain away the clear by means of the obscure; on the contrary, the very reverse is the recognized rule. In the next place, there are certainly other ways of interpreting the passage; in other words, it is not necessary to understand it so that it comes into conflict with the plain words of Scripture. For instance, it is not at all certain that those "under the earth" are simply the dead (those who have gone down to the grave), in contrast with those still living (those "on the earth"), and the angel hosts in heaven. Then again, bending the knee to Christ does not necessarily mean being saved in His name and by His mediation. It only implies recognizing Him as being the mighty Lord, the Son of God. Even in His humiliation the very demons made such an acknowledgment of Him (*vide, e.g.*, Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 23, 24; *cf.* Jas. ii. 19); why, then, should not the unsaved have to do the same when they see Him as the Judge of all the world seated on His throne of glory? Since here there is manifest mention of a confession which all must one day make, this view will seem to be the most natural to everyone who, from a consideration of many other evidences from Scripture which will be noticed in their place, cannot take for granted that all, without exception, will be saved. And then we certainly dare not summarily reject the possibility that there are some in Hades who, in a saving way, may one day come to bow the

knee to the Saviour—we mean some of those who in this life have not had the opportunity of learning to know Him,—a subject which we hope to consider carefully at a later stage.

We maintain, therefore, that the New Testament does not teach that believers go to Hades at all.

Just as absolutely must we reject Kliefoth's laboured attempt to prove that the place of torment to which the ungodly at death descend is not in Hades. According to his view, Hades, in the New Testament, is akin to Sheol in the Old. Thither, under the old covenant, all went without distinction. What is said on this subject is, according to him, not the Old Testament's imperfect representation, but the statement of the fact, a position we have previously tried to controvert (pp. 109–13). This Sheol or Hades was, at Christ's descent, emptied, since they who would then believe on Him went to heaven, and they who would not believe to a place of torment which was not Hades, but merely a place of custody for those who had not yet come to know Jesus, who had not received His call, a class in which Kliefoth reckons even the Old Testament saints, because the prophecies about the Saviour were so obscure.

That Hades which was emptied at Christ's descent is now, however, once again peopled with souls; for thither go all who in life have not come into communion with Christ, consequently all the heathen. In no sense is it a place of torment; it is merely a place of custody for those who are not believers, without, however, being haters of God, since they have never received, and thus have never opposed or rejected, the call of God. The unbelievers, those who have rejected God, on the other hand, do go to a place of torment, which, however, is not in Hades, for there there is neither torment nor joy.

The thoughtful reader will doubtless at once ask: How does he explain away Luke xvi. 23? There it is expressly said of the rich man: "In Hades he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham." Consequently he was in torments when he was in Hades, and he proceeds to call his abode "this place of torment" (ver. 28). How, then, is it possible to get over the statement that Hades either is or

includes the place of torment? Well, Kliefoth contrives to do so in this way, that he here takes Hades as a figurative expression for "the state of death." The meaning will therefore be that when the rich man awoke in "the state of death" (Hades), he found himself in "a place of torment" (and this is the first reference to such a place) which was not Hades, and it was just as certainly not Gehenna (hell), but a place different from both of these, a place of torment of a purely temporary kind for the souls of unbelievers until the judgment. An interpretation which has to make use of such arbitrary and unnatural tricks in order to maintain its meaning has condemned itself. The fact simply is, that of the twelve passages in the New Testament where Hades is mentioned there is not a single one which can be interpreted as meaning "the state of death." They are easily summed up: Capernaum shall be brought down to Hades (Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15); the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the Church of God (Matt. xvi. 18); the rich man lifted up his eyes in Hades (Luke xvi. 23); God will not leave Christ's soul in Hades (Acts ii. 27, 31); "O death, where is thy sting? O grave (Hades), where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 55); Christ has the keys of Hades (Rev. i. 18); when the rider on the pale horse, whose name was death, rode forth, Hades accompanied him (Rev. vi. 8; *i.e.* on the death of the ungodly there follows their entrance into Hades); and at the judgment both death and Hades shall be cast into the lake of fire, *i.e.* destroyed (Rev. xx. 13, 14). In these passages the translation usually given is "hell," but the word employed depended on the quite arbitrary opinion of the translators. They ought everywhere to have used Hades, since the word is untranslatable. But in this, at least, the translation is right, that it everywhere regards the word as the designation of a place. The only passage where one might be tempted to translate it by "the state of death" is Acts ii. 27 and 31, but since these verses are a citation from Psalms xvi. 10, where the original word is Sheol (the kingdom of death), this passage falls into line with the others.

We must therefore continue to assume that all who do

not at death go to heaven (*i.e.* all non-believers) go to Hades. It is certainly also the place of which mention is made when it is said of Judas, that he went to "his own place," the place that corresponded to his state (Acts i. 25).

It is undoubtedly the case that in the New Testament other expressions for the abode of the unsaved appear, such as "the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15), and "Gehenna" (in our Bible translated "hell"), a word which likewise occurs twelve times. These expressions, however, do not designate the soul's temporary place of abode until the judgment, but the common everlasting abode, after judgment, of the damned (souls and bodies) and of the devil, and it is never said in Scripture that any soul goes thither immediately after death. It is not even said that the devils are there *now*. Their present abode is designated "the deep" (Luke viii. 31), "the bottomless pit" (Rev. ix. 1, 2, xx. 1-3), or "Tartarus" (2 Pet. ii. 4, in our Bible inaccurately rendered "hell"), also a word of heathen origin, which in the Greek mythology indicates the dark place, deep under the earth whither the Olympian gods hurled down the powers (the Titans) that rose in rebellion against them, and where they bound them with indissoluble bonds,—consequently an excellent image for the place where the devils are "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6; *cf.* 2 Pet. ii. 4). The lake of fire and Gehenna (the real hell), on the other hand, belong exclusively to the period after judgment. That place of fire is "prepared for the devil and his angels," but it becomes also the abode of those who voluntarily join themselves (the damned) to him, even although the place was not really "prepared" for them. This eternal place of torment is first created (or at least comes first into operation) at the same time that God transfers His elect to the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. xxi. 1 *et seq.*) and there dwells with them, just as the devil in hell (Gehenna, the lake of fire) lives with his own. Until then we have only to do with "heaven" and "Hades."

But where is this Hades? We were unable to answer the question about where heaven is, and we must also with respect to Hades confess our absolute ignorance. Roman

Catholics are wont to locate it in the centre of the earth, and some Protestants have done the same. They have been induced to adopt this conclusion partly, evidently, because the Old Testament Sheol was supposed to lie in the depths (*cf.* what is said on p. 97), partly because some New Testament passages seem to speak of Hades as a place which lies low, since movement thither is downward. Such a passage is Matthew xi. 23, where it is said that Capernaum shall be brought down to Hades. But the term here is manifestly not the designation of a place, it is the designation of a state. By Christ's residence and wonderful works at Capernaum that town was exalted to the dignity of heaven, for it was called Christ's own city (Matt. ix. 1; Mark ii. 1), the town of Him who was the Lord of heaven. And by rejecting Him it was to be humiliated as deeply as it had been exalted. Neither the exaltation nor the humiliation was local. And when it is said of Dives that "he lift up his eyes," and saw Abraham (Luke xvi. 23), this does not necessarily mean more than that he, as it were, opened his eyes, awoke; but even if the passage is regarded as referring to a place, at the most, it only shows that Hades lay low in relation to Abraham's bosom, and says nothing whatever about its position in relation to the surface of the earth. That the Old Testament ideas of Sheol and of the life hereafter cannot on the whole be used as evidence for what is New Testament teaching we have at an earlier stage endeavoured to show. And so there only remains the obscure passage formerly referred to, Philippians ii. 10, where there is mention of those "under the earth." But to attempt to show from that obscure passage that the New Testament also supposes the kingdom of death to be situated deep down in the earth is very questionable indeed, for—and we have already indicated this—it is by no means certain that the reference here is to anything except the grave, and this likewise holds good of Revelation v. 3, 13, where the expression again occurs. We dare not therefore say that the New Testament, like the Old, refers the kingdom of death to the depths of the earth, even if it must be conceded that it uses expressions which can be so understood. Probably the use of such expressions is due to the fact that

the New Testament language has retained the Old Testament colour, even in cases where the subject-matter has become essentially different. Besides, when the body is seen to be laid down in the dark grave, it is very natural to use even of the soul such expressions as have borrowed their colour from the grave, for the soul also disappears like the body from the land of the living, and enters upon an existence which is as much hidden from our mortal eye as the body which the earth covers. And so it is natural enough to use expressions which recall the depositing of the body in the grave.

It is possibly also this association of ideas that has given rise to the conception which has found expression in the words of our Creed, that Christ "descended" to Hades (in our Norwegian translation, "to hell"; but in the original Greek and Latin text of the Creed it is said, "He descended to the under-world," *i.e.* Hades), an expression, however, which has hardly any biblical warrant; for in 1 Peter iii. 18, 19, which is practically the only passage that speaks of this descent, it is not said that He "descended," but that He "went" (to Hades). Certainly appeal has also been made to Ephesians iv. 9: "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" And it must undoubtedly be admitted that, if it were certain that this passage spoke of Christ's visit to Hades, there would be here some kind of scriptural warrant both for the expression "descended" and for the claim that the New Testament also refers Hades to the interior of the earth. But the line of thought seems to show that those expositors are right who think that here there is no reference to this matter at all. His descent is contrasted with His ascent; but this latter is manifestly His ascension up on high (iv. 8), consequently His ascension to heaven. And when it is said that that descent conditions this ascent, then it can only be His descent from heaven to earth, when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." That was a descent to "the lower parts of the earth," *i.e.* to the earthly regions, which, in relation to the heavenly, are the lower. That descent was in truth the condition of His ascension; for without first descend-

ing from heaven to earth, and becoming man here, He could not as God-man have ascended from earth to heaven.

Here we must close the question of where Hades is, by again stating that we do not know anything about its locality.¹

Concerning the state of souls in Hades, especially with respect to their comfort, we know very little. The fact is, that in the whole of the New Testament there is scarcely found more than a single passage which distinctly refers to this state, and that is the well-known and frequently mentioned passage in Luke xvi. 19–31 about Dives and Lazarus. The other passages which mention the state of the unsaved

¹ As we leave this question about the place, we shall by way of note give a brief survey of the localities in the future state according to Roman Catholic teaching. According to it, the following places and spaces will be found after death :—

1. *Heaven*. Thither go not all Christians, but only God's saints who are free from all sin and guilt when they leave this life.

2. *The under-world* (Infernus), which lies deep down beneath the earth. Thither go all others. But this under-world again is divided into four sections, viz. :—

(a) *The actual hell* (Infernus damnatorum), in the lowest recesses of the earth, where all unbelievers and heathen will be tormented to all eternity. Their misery consists partly in being cut off from seeing God and the heavenly glory (*pœna damni*) and partly in an indescribable feeling of pain (*pœna sensus*).

(b) *The court of the fathers* (Limbus patrum), a place in which the pious Old Testament fathers had to pass the time until Christ's advent, not in pain certainly, but yet without the bliss of heaven (*pœna damni*). But at His descent into the kingdom of death Christ took them all with Him and led them up to heaven. Therefore that place is now empty.

(c) *The court of the children* (Limbus infantum), i.e. the place whither all unbaptized children go, and where they will remain to all eternity. Yet there is no torment there, but only lack of bliss (*pœna damni*).

(d) *Purgatory* (Ignis purgatorius). Thither go all adults from the Old and the New Testament Church who at their death do not stand outside of the fellowship of God, but yet have sins to atone for. These penances they have to endure in purgatory. There, too, just as in hell, are both lack of bliss and sense of pain (*pœnæ damni et sensus*). Souls are tormented not merely by inner pangs, but also by material flames. It is this subterranean fire which sometimes bursts forth in volcanoes. This torment, however, will not be everlasting for any of them, but will only last "until they are thoroughly cleansed." The torment can be mitigated and curtailed by the prayers of the living, by masses for the soul, by indulgences, etc. (Vide *Cat. Rom.* F. vi. 3; *Can. Trid.* sess. 25, and the exhaustive treatises by the Scholastics and Bellarmine).

seem to refer to the time after the judgment. The question then becomes: What can we learn from that passage about this state? There are not many words in it, but they are very weighty and well fitted to fill us with serious thoughts, and to show us how necessary it is that we should in the day of grace place ourselves in such a relation to the Lord that we can escape the dreadful destiny of being relegated to that place.

When the rich man awoke he was in torment, or was enduring pangs. The original word is used in classic Greek generally of the torture to which the authorities subjected criminals during trial in order to extract a confession from them, then of torment in general (here in the plural, pangs). Later the rich man calls the place where he is, "this place of torment." And the torment there was very great, for he says, "I am in anguish in this flame" (ver. 24 R.V.), and Abraham repeats the words, when he says, "Now he (Lazarus) is comforted, and thou art in anguish." The original expression is very strong and signifies chiefly the feeling of gnawing, piercing pains, and bodily or mental pangs. This suffering is made even more graphic by images borrowed from heat and thirst, which are related to each other as cause to effect, for great heat induces thirst. But that there cannot really be a reference to material flames and bodily thirst is evident from this, that it is only the disembodied soul that goes to Hades, and the soul cannot be affected by material torments. Such torments, therefore, we cannot imagine in Hades.¹ It must therefore be grievous anguish of soul that is indicated by these expressions.² The flames of sinful passion which still burn but have no longer anything to consume (can no longer find vent in a life of sin), and therefore must gnaw the soul itself, the consciousness of being excluded from heaven, of having forfeited bliss by one's own fault, these are the flames and the thirst. The torments

¹ It is a very different matter when we speak of the real hell (Gehenna), whither both soul and body go after the judgment (Matt. x. 28).

² On the other hand, one cannot, as some have done, aver that, since the rich man hoped that Lazarus would be able to quench his thirst with a drop of water, it certainly must have been a bodily thirst. The reference to water only shows that the figure has been fully carried out.

come not from without, but from within. Every lost soul has the instrument of torment within itself, without respect to its place of abode.

Here, then, we have a contribution towards the answering of the question whether the state is alike for all who go to Hades. For if it is the case that the character of this state essentially has its root and ground in the state of each individual soul, it must also vary greatly in different individuals. For although it is the case that only faith in Christ can save (*i.e.* secure admission to heaven), and the great difference between men with respect to their relation to salvation becomes the difference between believing and not believing, yet it must at the same time be admitted that amongst non-believers themselves there are very great mutual differences. The greatest and most essential is that which exists between those who have been within the range of the influence of God's calling grace, but have resisted and rejected the call, and those who have received no such call at all (the heathen). The rich man had such a call in Moses and the prophets, but was not willing to listen to it. Consequently what is said about his anguish of soul in Hades cannot altogether be said of the heathen, for they have had less light and therefore less responsibility. Their souls cannot be supposed to be so ripe in sin as his; for nothing ripens men more in sinful defiance of God than the constant rejection of His gracious call. But if those uncalled ones are less advanced in evil, they have on that very account less material for the anguish for which souls have the elements in themselves. They have no need to upbraid themselves for wasting the opportunity given for salvation (for they have had no such opportunity at all), and this self-reproach must be considered to be really the main element in the soul-anguish. Their state in Hades, therefore, must be supposed to be more tolerable, and Scripture at least indirectly hints at this. For when it says that the one who does not do his Lord's will because he knows it not, shall receive few stripes (Luke xii. 48), and for the same reason, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for Chorazin and Bethsaida,

which had seen the Lord's mighty works without repenting (Matt. x. 15), that certainly refers specially to the final judgment; but yet there is no ground for supposing that at the judgment there will be applied a standard of responsibility different from that by which the provisional decision that takes place at death is arrived at.

But even within each of these two classes, the called and the uncalled, there is undoubtedly a very great difference between different individuals. In Christendom itself not merely are men's capacities for recognizing the truth very various, but even their opportunities for recognizing it. In dark ages, in out-of-the-way corners, in benighted lands, and in communities where the light of truth only burns with an extremely faint and flickering flame, responsibility must certainly be less than where the light shines clearly. And where a man's life is such that everything seems fitted to draw him to the Lord, the responsibility must be greater than in the case of the man who throughout his whole life is placed amid circumstances and conditions where temptations greatly prevail. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke xii. 48). And just as the responsibility is different in different individuals, so is it also when sinfulness develops differently. There are upright and honest doubters who certainly never reach saving faith in this life, but still who loyally strive to discover the truth and endeavour to live a correct and blameless life, and who often exert every effort to benefit their fellow-men. And there are others who knowingly, wilfully, complacently wallow in sin, and do all they can to blot out their consciousness of God and silence the voice of their conscience, destroy all that is naturally good in them, and do their fellow-men all possible injury. Such souls must not only have greater guilt than the former, but they also contain within themselves a larger measure of that inner depravity which reveals itself in the soul-pangs in Hades. They have more to bemoan and more of the consuming fire of evil passions which will consume them in the kingdom of death, where it has nothing else to consume. Of course, their torment will be all the greater.

A very similar rule applies to the heathen themselves. Even in their case it is possible to speak of greater or less faithfulness to the light of nature, so far as it reaches, and a more or less unbridled attachment to, or a more or less serious conflict with, the sinful passions,—and consequently a greater or less responsibility and a greater or less ripeness in ungodliness, which again seems to suggest a different state in Hades. We need only think of such human monsters as Catiline and Nero, and compare them with an unbeliever like Socrates, who seems to have had such a strangely acute ear for the voice of conscience, and who so honestly endeavoured to follow it. Who would not feel it to be an injustice if these three after death should experience the same fate? The difference in the guilt and the responsibility they have incurred seems to be so palpable that in the souls of the former, in a degree quite different from that of the latter, the elements of anguish must be self-contained.

It may indeed be said that the difference in their guilt will find its expression in this, that the one will have lighter punishment than the other before sharing in salvation. That we dare not, so far as the uncalled are concerned, summarily deny. On the contrary, we find it psychologically reasonable that their receptivity may be great, and that their earthly life therefore may come to bear fruit even for their final salvation, a point we shall hereafter consider with some minuteness. But this does not prevent us from likewise supposing that even their state in Hades will be a “more tolerable” one, both because of lesser guilt and because their own spiritual constitution includes less of that which, in our estimation, will produce soul-anguish during their abode in Hades.

We now turn to the last, and in a sense the most important of all the questions which can be raised regarding souls in Hades. Is there the possibility of any change in their state?

We have already tried to show that the theoretic possibility of change exists where time and space still are. But it does not follow as a matter of course that change is really possible or even probable. For there is required for this

both the mutability of the souls concerned *per se* and the existence of something which can actually effect the change; and to this subject we shall now address ourselves.

When the question before us is carefully pondered, it will soon be apparent that it naturally resolves itself into the following four:—

1. Can it be supposed that any progressive development will take place in the saved in heaven?

2. Is a similar development possible in Hades?

3. Is there a possibility that the development can even assume such a character that any of the saved in heaven may by a fall be transferred to Hades (or be damned)?

4. Is there, conversely, any hope of such a development in Hades that any of the souls there can pass to heaven (or be saved)?

How far such changes can be assumed will—as has already been hinted—partly depend on whether the souls in these states *per se* are susceptible of changes, and partly on whether it can be demonstrated that within these states there is something capable of producing the change.

As concerns the former, then, it seems to belong to the nature of a finite being, of a creature, that it never can altogether cease to be open to changes, at all events in the sense of a continued development. Everything that is limited must also be liable to extension beyond the limits of the space it at any period occupies; only the infinite God is, as such, immutable, since He is not capable of development. But, in the next place, whether development will actually take place, and in what direction it will tend, must depend on whether the individual (here the soul) is subject to any influence—something acting from within or from without—and on the nature of such an influence.

After these prefatory remarks we now proceed to consider separately each of these four questions.

1. There are some, doubtless, who are inclined to suppose that the blessed dead have already entered into perfection, and so cannot become more perfect than they are. They certainly are called, as we have seen, “the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. xii. 23). But then the fact has been overlooked

that all perfection in a creature is relative, not absolute. They are already free from sin, and thus there can be no thought of a purification. The will is already tried and has no need of further strengthening, for it will no more be subject to temptation. But the good, sin-free will is an important inner force moving for progress. And is there not room for an ever-increasing knowledge of God and His thoughts and ways, and, along with this knowledge, for a constantly increasing love to Him? And is there not in blessed fellowship with God in heaven the very richest opportunity for the development both of that knowledge and that love? Fellowship with God, and the sight of Him, must necessarily gradually lead souls that are free from sin to know Him better, to become more and more absorbed in Him, and to be in constantly fuller measure filled with His rich love. And fellowship with all God's saints, the mutual intercourse among God's elect, to which we have formerly referred, seems as if it could not be without influence on their knowledge or on the strength of the love which unites every individual with all his fellow-believers. And if it is the case that they remember their mortal life, of what importance, both for their knowledge and their love of God, must be their power to utilize this material in the light of heaven and to look back from their exalted station on all God's dealings with them in time and to have all their riddles solved.

But it must be acknowledged that Scripture does not say much about this increase in knowledge and love, although there are certainly hints of it. It is said: "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform (finish) it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6). Now this *day* is not the day of death but the day of judgment. The idea seems, therefore, to be this, that the good work in the believer will continue without interruption even in the intermediate state, although it must be admitted that the passage might also be so strained as to mean only 'perform or perfect it,' so that when that day does come the individual will prove to be quite perfect; but this would be only a forced and artificial explanation, whilst the former one is clear and in complete accordance with the literal sense of the words. The same holds true of

1 Corinthians i. 8: "(He) shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Of course this growth in knowledge must be understood to be quite different from our knowledge here on earth, in the sense that at every point in it we shall be quite satisfied with what we know, shall not feel the want of more knowledge, shall not, with anxious longing, desire for the solution of all mysteries; for that would be liable to disturb our very bliss itself.

2. For the same reasons the unsaved in Hades must be understood to be open to a further advance, namely, in evil. No creature is so evil that there can be no possibility of becoming still worse. We expect to be met with the objection: But what of the devil then? Is he not a proof of the very opposite? We answer by putting another question: Where is it written that after his fall Satan has not progressed or may not still progress further in evil? Certainly Scripture does not say anything to the contrary. But when Scripture says nothing for or against we may at least be allowed to believe what seems to follow from the nature of the case, and then we must say that it appears to be not only possible, but probable, that even in the case of the devil there is a growth in evil. The possibility of this is found in his relativity as a creature, and the propensity towards evil which he has in his own wicked will. And if it is the case that a life in sin ripens us ever more and more in evil, why should not the devil's life of many thousands of years of constant conflict with God have some influence in ripening him in devilishness? When it is said that he also is "reserved unto punishment" (2 Pet. ii. 4), that itself will make him even more miserable than he is at present; but this growth in unhappiness demands as its converse a corresponding advance in his own inner development.

That, however, is only an episode in our argument. We have here to do not chiefly with the devil, but with the souls of the unsaved. That these can make some advance in evil in the intermediate state, therefore, is only the theoretic possibility due to their relativity and their relation to time

and space. If this possibility is to become reality, there must also be something which works upon the soul and impels it forward. And something of that kind there is in reality. In the first place, impenitent souls retain their evil disposition with all its sinful thoughts and desires, and there is no reason to suppose that these will not still continue to operate. Such souls will become not less sinful although they have no longer any world of the senses to disport in. This will rather produce the effect that godlessness and sensuality will more and more become a conscious hatred to the God from whose fellowship they see themselves excluded. To this has also to be added the influence of the evil association with all the unsaved souls, many of whom at their departure from earthly life have entered still further than others into obdurate wickedness and must therefore be supposed to influence the others to a constant advance in evil. And then, we must likewise remember that they are still under the influence of the devil; for it is not conceivable that this spiritual power should lack the opportunity of exercising an influence upon these unsaved souls whose dispositions so thoroughly accord with his own, an influence which can only consist in his incitement of them to an ever-increasing hatred to God and all that belongs to Him.

And if there be such a development, then it appears as if we must also consider this and its cumulative effect as also belonging to the things upon which sentence must be pronounced at the last day, and according to which the degrees in the eternal punishment that follows the judgment will be decided, and that in such a manner that due regard will be paid both to culpability and to susceptibility to these various degrees of punishment. This development, however, is only a continuation and a result of that which has begun in the body (*i.e.* in this life), and it is that alone which we mortals can observe; it is therefore natural that the eternal retribution of Scripture should be ascribed only to the acts which have been done by each one during his earthly life (the intermediate state being overlooked), since it is said, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10).

3. There are many who have thought that where the possibility of progression exists there must also be the possibility of retrogression, and have therefore supposed that there may be the possibility of a fall even for saved souls up to the time of the judgment.¹ However, that is an erroneous conclusion, which is based on the overlooking of the fact that for a movement there are not merely required time and space and movableness, but also something to excite the motion, to impel in the direction whither the movement is to be. Now, in the saved there is that which impels them forward, namely, their inner spiritual life, with the forces of expansion in it, and likewise the fellowship with God and His saints, which has formerly been referred to. And so there may possibly be continued advance in goodness. But is there, on the other hand, anything to draw them back? No. What is there to have any such effect? From the temptations of the flesh from within they were freed when by a blessed death they were set free from sin. The devil has no right to enter heaven, for he and his whole host of demons have power only in the air (Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12); they rule only in the atmosphere of this earth of ours. The same thing holds true of the world with its seductions. What is there then to influence a blessed soul to apostasy? The only possibility must lie in the soul still harbouring sinful inclinations, which could be gradually overcome between death and doomsday; and indeed, that is generally assumed by those who regard such a fall as possible during that period. But that is exactly what we cannot admit. If any soul—as in an earlier section we endeavoured to establish—has received an entrance into heaven, where nothing impure can enter, then that soul must already be pure and free from all sinful tendencies. If he has once looked on God, then he must also be holy; for without holiness “no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. xii. 14). If he is now one of “the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. xii. 23), then he must at least be free from sinful lusts.

And when the souls of the saved in Revelation are represented in white robes, that is, as we have already pointed out,

¹ Oertel, *Hades*, sec. 30; and also J. Müller, *Die christ. Lehre von der Sunde*, V. 5 (5th ed.).

really an expression implying that they are perfectly pure and spotless. Thus there is as little possibility of their being the objects of an inner as of an outer temptation to sin, and so there can be no thought of apostasy. Rather, indeed, we ought to consider that their will is so occupied with what is good as to render them proof against temptations, even although they were exposed to them, than suggest their falling without any temptation at all.

Certainly it has been objected: But did not the angels fall although they themselves were good, and there was no tempter then? It is quite certain that here we are face to face with a mystery which we can never satisfactorily explain, the origin of evil. But yet there is this important point of difference, that the angels, as free personal beings, must at one time have been subjected to a test of obedience, and such a test necessitated a choice, which, of course, implies two possibilities; whilst, on the other hand, the souls of the blest have already undergone the test of obedience and their trial-time is behind them.

The supposition that a fall from a state of grace even after death may be possible, conflicts, however, with the clear testimony of Scripture. We need only call to mind such passages as Revelation ii. 10: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (*cf.* Matt. x. 22, xxii. 13; James i. 12). The Lord could not have spoken thus if there was the possibility of fall after death.

4. Then, finally, we come to the last and most difficult question: Can any fundamental change take place in the state of the unblest in Hades; in other words, is there any possibility of conversion after death?

It might seem natural enough to suppose that since there is room for progression in evil in the unsaved in Hades, as we have already endeavoured to substantiate, there might also be room for retrogression; and many have actually come to this conclusion. But it is quite as rash to assume this in the case of the unblest in Hades as of the blest in heaven. When a stone is suspended by a rope over a lofty precipice there is still room for movement both up and down. Gravity draws it down, but an opposite force, such as the hand, can by the

aid of the rope draw it up again. If the rope be cut, it is acted on by the force of gravity alone, and it can then only fall, which it does with ever-increasing momentum; but upwards it cannot move without being influenced by an opposite force. So long as the sinner lives in the day of grace he is suspended by such a rope over the precipice of the abyss of destruction. The saving hand of God tries to draw him up, whilst the gravitation force of the natural heart draws him down. Now, if this saving hand of God lets him go when the rope, by a death without repentance, is cut, he can only fall, and he continues to fall ever deeper so long as there is time or room for falling. Upward he can never rise unless new forces which work in a direction opposite to that of the fall again lay hold of him and overcome the downward-dragging force. In other words, in order that any conversion or salvation in Hades may be possible, souls even there must be subject to God's calling grace, and to such an action of the saving means of grace that they can thereby be led back to God. Even in Hades it holds true, that if the sinner is to be helped, God must help him. By the forces working in himself and in his surroundings he can only be led ever farther away from God, but never up toward Him.

The question therefore becomes: Have we reason to suppose that God will do anything of that kind, and if so, in what way?

At first sight it might seem as if much could be said in support of such a hope. The time man has spent in a sinful life is, for instance, so infinitely short in relation to eternity that it might appear strange that his destiny to all eternity should depend merely on his short earthly life, or at least that his final salvation or damnation should altogether depend on it, even if the development in the intermediate state had some influence on the degree of bliss or torment in eternity. Indeed, it might seem as if it would actually be injustice on the part of God to punish the sinfulness of a brief life with everlasting pangs; for there is no apparent relation between such guilt and such a penalty. Besides, it is a fact that the great majority of mankind has never known a gospel, never heard God's call, never received an invitation to the Great

Supper. Would it not be unjust if all these, without any fault, as it seems to us, were to be left outside to all eternity? And finally, there are so many who in this life have come so far that it can be said of them, as Jesus said of a scribe who came to Him (Mark xii. 34), that they are "not far from the kingdom of God." Are we not entitled to expect that an opportunity will be afforded to such to advance further, to enter in? And is there not often amongst those whom we certainly dare not regard as Christians, so much that is noble and good, so much honest seeking after truth, that we, on that very ground, may hope that they will some day attain to clearness and find what they sought, even although they did not reach it in this life? It is certainly said, "He that seeketh findeth" (Matt. vii. 8). And are there not, even amongst those who, we must hope, died as Christians, and therefore were saved, many who had advanced so little in sanctification as to make us believe that in the future life they require not only development but even purification, in order that they may take their place among the "spirits of just men made perfect"? But if, beyond the grave, there is a purification for imperfectly sanctified believers, it is surely natural to suppose that there is the possibility of conversion for unbelievers.

Besides, the great majority of men even in Christendom—not to speak of the thousands of millions of the heathen—are cut off in the midst of a life which is very far indeed below that standard of holiness which must be the condition of entrance into heaven. That they will all be damned would be a thought so dreadful that even we could not endure it, and how much less would the God of Love be able to endure it? Of course, we must assume that after death they somehow receive the opportunity of reaching that goal to which their efforts in the previous life had failed to carry them.

In conclusion, would it not be a dishonour to God that the devil should have more subjects at last than the Lord Himself? And would it not conflict with the idea of God's omnipotence and omniscience to suppose that finite creatures (the devil and men) could succeed in thwarting for ever His

plan of salvation and His gracious will, the substance of which is expressed in the familiar words, "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"? (1 Tim. ii. 4).

Such arguments have been employed.¹

A great deal might be said on each of these arguments in favour of the assumption that a conversion after death is possible or even probable. But to discuss them in detail would lead us too far. We therefore confine ourselves to saying that we can find nothing really convincing in any of them. For instance, we prove nothing by giving ourselves up to philosophizing about what seems to be worthy of God or unworthy of Him, according to our ideas; for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His thoughts higher than our thoughts, and His ways higher than ours (Isa. lv. 9). And still less do we succeed in throwing light on the subject by speaking of how God must decide these questions, when the decision would gratify our sentiment; for sentiment is truly a poor guiding-star on such difficult paths as these. The question is: What will God do with the unsaved souls in the intermediate state? But we know God's will only from His Word, and so the question becomes this: What does God's Word teach us on this point?

It is probably beyond our power to point to an absolutely direct passage of Scripture for or against the possibility of salvation in the intermediate state; for there are passages in God's Word pointing both ways, which it seems difficult enough at times to reconcile, although we certainly believe that it is possible to reconcile them, indeed, that it is necessary to do so, since Scripture cannot contradict itself. But since the evidence of Scripture on this subject in two opposite directions may thus be said to neutralise itself, there will always be a certain amount of uncertainty left so long as we only confine ourselves to hearing witnesses for and against. If we are to arrive at any greater certainty we must go back to the fundamental principles of Scripture concerning man's salvation, and seek to show what follows from this in

¹ Those who wish to see an exhaustive discussion of this line of argument, in specially eloquent words, are referred to Farrar's famous *Eternal Hope*.

elucidation of the question with which we are at present engaged, and that we shall endeavour now to point out.

It may, at a superficial glance, seem as if there were a very great abundance of passages affording hope that salvation might be attained by far more than the comparatively few who become believers in this life.¹ We shall mention the most important of them. God "will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4). He has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). Christ is "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2, iv. 14). He "taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). He tasted death for every man (Heb. ii. 9). "It pleased the Father by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (Col. i. 19, 20). In Christ God has reconciled the world unto Himself (2 Cor. v. 19). And the purpose of this reconciliation was that He "might gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. i. 10), "have mercy upon all" (Rom. xi. 32); for He came "not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John xii. 47). And so, too, Christ seeks to reach all with His call of grace and His salvation. He goes after the lost sheep until He finds it (Luke xv. 4). He will, when He is lifted up from the earth, draw all men unto Him (John xii. 32). It seems, too, as if one day He will succeed in this, for the whole mass (humanity) will be leavened with the leaven of the gospel (Matt. xiii. 33). "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22). "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. v. 18). "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow" (Phil. ii. 10).

From these and similar passages, which might be quoted, we may conclude with absolute certainty:

(a) That it really is God's gracious will in Christ that all men should be saved.

(b) That Christ has made atonement for all, and therefore provided salvation for all.

¹ Such passages are to be found in Farrar's book, pp. 219-24, and still more exhaustively in the anonymous German work, *Universalismus* (Stuttg. 1861-2, 2 vols.), and many others.

(c) That it is God's earnest wish that this salvation provided by Christ should reach all.

(d) That He earnestly seeks all, will draw all with His gracious call, and that therefore that call must be general, universal,—a fact which, we hope to show, has an important bearing on the question of a free offer of salvation to all men.

All these truths the Church at all times has taught and asserted. The question is only whether such passages as the last four of those above quoted likewise prove that this salvation will also in reality one day be enjoyed by all. For if this could be proved, we must either assume a conversion in the intermediate state, or (as Kliefoth, who, however, does not extend it to all, but only to those who have not received any call from God in this life) connect the possibility of such a conversion with Christ's advent, or finally, imagine that it might take place even after the judgment, an alternative which has the least support of all from Scripture; but on this point more anon.

There is one fact which at the outset must make us somewhat chary about regarding these passages as evidence in favour of conversion after death, and it is, that if they proved anything in this respect they would prove too much, and therefore fall under the familiar rule: "He who proves too much, proves nothing." If they had any bearing on this question, they would show that all without exception will be saved. But that would conflict both with man's freedom and with the evidence of Scripture. Freedom, surely, demands that the sinner after death, as well as before it, shall have the power to reject God's offer of grace if such is made to him, and then there will always be some who will not be converted either in this life or in that which is to come. This, too, Scripture testifies in the clearest possible fashion, for it speaks of those "whose end is destruction" (Phil. iii. 19), and who therefore cannot at last be saved; and that is known by the sinner who will not be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come (Matt. xii. 31, 32). There will come a time—whether it be at the moment of death or at the judgment—when the door to the

bridegroom's house will be closed, and those who are outside will knock in vain for admission (Matt. xxv. 10-12).

But it is quite impossible to regard these passages in the sense that has been indicated. A more careful consideration of them will show us that they do not carry any such meaning. The passage about the leaven only tells us that it has the faculty of gradually leavening the whole lump of dough in which it has been placed, and that promise is being fulfilled from day to day as the gospel extends from tribe to tribe, until at last it has reached every nation on the earth. The whole paragraph manifestly speaks only of the extension of God's kingdom in the world, not of something which lies outside of this life altogether. And if we look closely at the words in 1 Corinthians xv. 22, the context will at once show that here there is no reference whatever to any spiritual revivifying of the spiritually dead, but only to the resurrection as a corporeal revivifying of the corporeally dead. The passage says nothing whatever concerning a conversion after death. Here we are merely taught that just as death came by Adam, so the resurrection came by Christ, who first broke the seal of the grave. As concerns Philippians ii. 9-11, we have already in another connection (p. 152) endeavoured to show that this does not necessarily indicate anything else than that at the day of judgment, if not previously, all, willing or unwilling, will acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, which even the devils do (Luke iv. 41), without, however, repenting and being saved. And now there only remains Romans v. 18. But the whole section to which it belongs (v. 12-21) is intended to show that the objective salvation (*i.e.* salvation outside of us and for us, not salvation in us and with our own consent) has the same extent as the fall in Adam, and therefore includes all men. Christ has died for all, and God has accepted this death as a sufficient ransom for all, and so far has passed on the fallen world the sentence of justification that it is now a redeemed world. More careful attention to the words of the original shows us this, even if we pay no regard to the line of thought of the whole section. There is no reference here to the guilt and righteousness of man, but to a sentence of damnation and a

sentence of acquittal by God. In Adam God pronounced the whole world guilty; in Christ He acquits it. And just because this is an objective, divine judgment, it is nowhere said (according to the original) of this justification (justification of life) that it is something which will come upon all men, but that it has come, that it is a thing which came once for all by the death of Christ, in virtue of which God passed the sentence of acquittal on the world in that its sin was atoned for, a sentence from which life for the sinner has resulted. The whole then belongs to the past, and has nothing to do with the future that awaits man after death.¹ For the first time, in the following verse (19), there is mention of the future; but then, it is not by any means said that all, but only that many, will be made righteous by the obedience of one.

There is thus nothing left of the supposed Scripture proof for a conversion after death in the passages quoted. And there is not, so far as we know, any better proof to support the idea. Most of the other passages that have been cited in support of it are even weaker. Thus some have cited Acts iii. 21, where there is mention of "the times of restitution of all things," and assumed that here is a good argument in favour of "the restitution of all things," in the sense of the "salvation of all men." But yet it is evident that in these words there is really no mention of anything which is to take place between death and the judgment, but of something which will first come to pass in connection with

¹ The passage even in the original is not quite clear, in so far as several words have to be supplied. But yet there is very little doubt, according to the context, that the whole utterance must be referred to past time. The words stand thus: "Therefore as by the offence of one (or by one offence), upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one (or by one righteousness) upon all men unto justification of life." It is manifest that something must be supplied in order to give a proper sense. The English Revised Version runs: "So then as through one trespass (the judgment came) unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness (the free gift came) unto all men to justification of life." The words in parentheses have been marked by the translators themselves as supplied.

Professor Bugge has, without introducing so much, on the whole certainly caught the meaning well. He renders the passage thus: "Therefore, as the fall of one man brought upon all men condemnation; so also the righteous act of one man brought upon all men justification of life."

the Lord's advent; there it certainly is said of the ascended Saviour that the heavens will receive Him (that is, He will remain seated at the Father's right hand) until this restitution takes place (not whilst it is taking place). Of course, this "restitution" must be the establishment of the kingdom of glory which will in its final form begin on the judgment day. It is designated as a "restitution" not of things in general, but "of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets"; in other words, this kingdom of glory which is then to begin is but the fulfilment of all the predictions about the glory of the messianic kingdom. When that is designated as a "restitution," it is because that messianic kingdom is Paradise in a renewed form (*cf.* Rev. ii. 7), a kingdom whose inhabitants again bear the image of God in which man was created.

It may seem strange that it is said that the heavens will only receive Christ until that takes place. But even in this it is quite accurate; for that kingdom of glory which is then to be established will not be in heaven but on the new earth, a view which we shall establish more completely later on.

Consequently, not even here have we scriptural evidence for conversion after death, and still less for the final salvation of all. When theologians have assumed the former, they have overlooked the fact that what is here presupposed is manifestly something which will first take place in connection with the Lord's advent; and when they have been anxious to deduce the latter from the words, they have not observed that the passage does not refer in any sense to the salvation of all persons, but to the complete fulfilment of all messianic prophecies concerning the final renewal and restitution of the kingdom of God that was marred by the Fall.

And finally, appeal has been made to such passages as Matthew xii. 31, 32 (*cf.* Mark iii. 28, 29; Luke xii. 10) and Matthew v. 26, xviii. 34. In the first passage it is certainly said that all sin shall be forgiven except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which shall be forgiven neither in this world nor in the next. Hence, some have said, it appears, first, that all sin (except this one) shall one day be forgiven; and second,

that this forgiveness takes place partly in this life and partly in the next. And it cannot be denied that this interpretation at the first glance seems to be in accordance with the wording of the passage. However, the former (that all sin shall one day be forgiven) would, as we have previously shown, conflict with other passages of Scripture, unless we assume that this one sin is more general than most people believe. Only if we assume that all obduracy against grace which lasts until death is sin against the Holy Ghost, will the knot be loosed. But then there would no longer be any comfort in this promise of the forgiveness of sin. It seems therefore as if the expression must indicate that all other sin but this is pardonable (*cf.* Isa. i. 18, xliii. 25; Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iii. 21–24; 1 John i. 7). And so far as the latter is concerned (forgiveness in the world to come), it is to be noted that “the world to come” does not, in the New Testament, designate the time after the death of the individual, but the time after Christ’s advent,—and after that event, there can be no forgiveness of sin, as we shall try to show later on.

It is most natural, therefore, to assume that the expression “neither in this world nor in the world to come” only means *never*. And this probability becomes absolute certainty when we look at the parallel passages in Mark and Luke. Luke simply says, “it shall not be forgiven him,” and Mark, “he hath never forgiveness.”

In Matthew v. 26 and xviii. 34 there is mention of those who are cast into prison and do not come out until they have paid the last farthing. Consequently the last farthing, it has been maintained, must be paid some day. That, however, is too hasty a conclusion. In a parable it will not do to force every single expression. It all depends upon the main thought, which in the present case is, that the one who will not himself forgive will not in his turn be forgiven,—and that does not imply that there will be a future forgiveness, but rather the very opposite. Besides, here there is no reference whatever to the remission of the debt (the sinner’s pardon), but to the payment of it by himself. And the idea of the one who is cast into prison in Hades, himself being

able to pay off his indebtedness would be quite foreign to Scripture, and indeed irreconcilable with it. But the one who is to be saved must be saved in virtue of the payment made for him by Christ. And so that "until" is in reality merely an expression for hopelessness. And in this sense our most thorough expositors of Scripture (such as Meyer, Tholuck, Keil) have regarded the passage; and we certainly agree that Tholuck is right when he terms it a theological subtlety to look for anything else, or more, in these passages than an expression for stern justice on the part of God towards the unmerciful. (*Vide* the note to Matt. v. 26 in Tholuck's exhaustive examination of the Sermon on the Mount.)

Consequently, on these passages we cannot build any hope of the possibility of a conversion after death.

But if it be thus, on the one hand, impossible to prove that there may be conversion after death, there are, on the other hand, passages which do not exclude the possibility of such, at least so far as concerns those who have not in this life had the opportunity of learning the way of salvation.

Our old theologians spoke a great deal about the "end of the day of grace" (*terminus gratiæ peremptorius*), after which there could be no idea whatever of the possibility of salvation, and it is certain that according to the Word of God there is such an end, a time when the door will be shut (Matt. xxv. 10; Luke xiii. 25). It is quite true that it is not directly said that this takes place at death; rather, Scripture seems to connect it with the Lord's coming at the judgment (so in the passages mentioned).¹ But when we observe what importance is attributed to this life as the period of grace, we are warranted in being in the highest degree suspicious of a view which would extend this period of grace beyond the bounds of life, also to such as have been the objects of God's calling and attracting grace here. There is not in all Scripture the slightest hint that they to whom God's Word is directed with exhortation to conversion will be able to attend to the exhortation outside of and after their earthly life. On the contrary,

¹ Passages like Ecclesiastes xi. 3, "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be," we may quite overlook, since only by an evident misunderstanding have they been applied to the question at issue.

we are warned in the most solemn way to utilize the present moment, and seek salvation before it is too late. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iii. 7, 8). "Redeeming the time" (Eph. v. 16). And when it is said that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27), evidently this judgment is that which is to take place at the last day (*cf.* p. 122). It is certainly not without great significance that the intermediate state is altogether passed over, and this would scarcely be the case if the sacred writer had thought that that state might have some bearing on the eternal weal or woe of his readers. And when the Apostle Paul says that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and then adds, "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 7, 8), it is quite clear that it is the life on earth he regards as the sowing time on which the eternal harvest depends. It is also in full harmony with this when the apostle in another place says, that when we appear before the judgment seat of Christ we shall receive the things done in the body, according to what a man hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. v. 10). The very same view is the ground for passages like Matthew xxv. 34 *et seq.* and Luke xiii. 25 *et seq.* In the former passage, the Saviour says that regard will only be paid to what the individual has done in the present life; and, in the latter passage, He indicates that hypocrites themselves at the judgment will appeal to their good deeds done in this life. The fruits which belief or unbelief has borne in this life are in each case the basis for decision acknowledged by both sides. For him who in this life has had the offer of salvation, but in unbelief has rejected it, God's Word has no consolation. Of him it is only said: "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John iii. 18). Of him Scripture says: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). And the rich man in torment had no such hope. Father Abraham merely

pointed out to Dives the great gulf fixed between him and the blest, over which none could pass (Luke xvi. 26).

It is altogether another matter when we turn to those who have received no call from God in this life. Here first and foremost we think of the heathen; but it may well be a question whether even within Christendom there are not times and places in which the light of the Church has been so covered by the bushel that it has not been able to light souls on to salvation, and so far as these are concerned there are possibly some who must be reckoned among the uncalled. It is of these uncalled we wish now to speak.

Certainly there are many of the passages already cited which seem to exclude any hope of conversion after death, and we must acknowledge that it is natural enough to apply them to all without distinction. But we must remember that the words are spoken or written to those who by such speaking and writing received a call from God; in this light they must be looked at and interpreted.

Scripture does not say much about the salvation of the heathen, for its main purpose was to enforce upon its readers the necessity of thinking of their own salvation rather than to instruct them about what would happen to the heathen. However, the Saviour does say that it will be more tolerable for the pagan towns, Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment than for the generation which had heard His blessed words and seen His wonderful works without repenting (Matt. xi. 20-24). Yet this "more tolerable" is not salvation, it is merely a lighter punishment. The same thing is implied when it is said of the one who in ignorance commits things worthy of stripes, that he shall be beaten with few stripes (Luke xii. 48). Such sayings, therefore, are not sufficient to give ground for any hope of salvation. But an excuse for the ignorant does lie in the words. This is still more evident in Christ's utterance in John ix. 41: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin"; and John xv. 22: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin." On the other hand, there are also passages which might appear to cut off all hope from the poor heathen. Amongst these we must reckon Rom.

ii. 12: "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." The apostle merely wishes to tell us what must be their lot if they have no share in God's grace, without expressing anything about whether this may be expected here or yonder. The sense is that if a Jew did what the law forbade, he was, according to the judgment of the law, a guilty man; and if a heathen did what conscience forbade, he was, according to the judgment of conscience, in the same state of guilt. Both of them were—the one by the written, the other by the unwritten law—"under sin" (Rom. iii. 9, xi. 32), but the intention of God from the very first was to have mercy upon them both. The question whether and when they might participate in such mercy will be answered, however, quite apart from the passage cited.

Since there is thus no direct passage of Scripture for or against the assumption that there may be hope of salvation for the heathen beyond the grave, we are compelled to consider what in this respect can be inferred from the teaching of Scripture about salvation in general.

In the age of Rationalism a great deal was said about the pious heathen being saved because they lived according to the "light of nature." Among the more orthodox, however, it was often said: All the heathen will be condemned because they have not followed the light of nature, have not taken to heart the revelation of God in nature, in their history, and in their conscience. It might appear as if this latter had some support in Rom. i. 18–32,¹ but in reality the two views amount to the same thing. Both are equally rationalistic and equally incompatible with what the Word of God teaches about the way and the means of salvation; for if the heathen are to be damned because they have not followed the light of nature, it is natural to assume that they might possibly be saved if they did follow that light,

¹ This agreement with Paul is only apparent. What he in that passage wishes to show is only this, that since the heathen of that day had not even attended to the knowledge of the truth they had,—or might have had,—so far as it went, but without fear revelled in vices which their own consciences condemned, they had thereby deprived themselves of any shadow of excuse for the sinfulness which made them guilty at the bar of God,

in other words, that that light is sufficient for salvation. And in this way the "pious heathen" would actually be able to enjoy salvation without any revelation and without any gospel. But the Word of God teaches us something quite different. It tells us in the clearest possible fashion that no salvation is possible apart from Christ; and about Him the heathen could certainly have received no information by the light of nature; and so that light would not have been of any avail to them for salvation, for salvation is to be found in Christ alone. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12, x. 43). He alone is the captain of our salvation (Heb. ii. 10). And consequently, the heathen cannot be saved except by entering into fellowship with Him.¹ If they are ever to be saved, Christ must be preached to them, and must in faith be received by them. Only faith in Christ saves: "And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. x. 14).

Having established this, we now return to the thesis previously presented and proved from Scripture, that God is willing that all men should be saved. The answering of our question depends, of course, to a very essential extent on these two incontrovertible truths. If it is really the case that God wishes all men to be saved, and that can only be effected by Christ being preached to them, then He must also desire that Christ shall be so preached; for the one who wills the end must also will the only means to attain that end.

Here, doubtless, many will say: Yes, that is true; God desires that the gospel shall be preached to all people, but

¹ We do not hereby mean to maintain that the conscientious following, on the part of the pious heathen, of the knowledge of the truth they have will be quite without fruit. It has its temporal blessing for them,—it prepares them for the gospel, it may possibly have the effect that God will by special arrangements provide for them an opportunity of salvation (*vide* the story of Cornelius in Acts x.), it will, without doubt, have the result that it makes their state beyond death more tolerable, and finally, it will perhaps also make them more susceptible of the salvation which is proclaimed to them after death, if there be any such proclamation.

the Christianity which ought to do the work is too tardy, and therefore the preaching of the gospel makes slow progress.

The objection is valid enough, but it does not prove anything in the matter before us. In the first place, it would be an injustice to the heathen if they were to forfeit salvation, not through any fault of their own, but through the fault of Christianity; and, in the next place, it would, even if Christianity had been absolutely faithful to its duty, be quite impossible that that should have secured for all the heathen the opportunity of hearing the tidings of salvation. Millions of them had perished before the injunction was given: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." And even after it had been given, millions, of necessity, would have had to leave this life before the gospel reached them. Of course, it might be asserted that God did not owe them any salvation. That is quite true, for all salvation is grace, and therefore not obligation. But since it is God's gracious will to save all in Christ, it seems to follow from this that there must be given to all an opportunity to come to Christ, or, in other words, that all may receive God's call to salvation,—at the time He chooses and by the means He deems adequate for the object. It seems hard enough to us that the results of the Fall have extended to all as original sin and original guilt; but that is rectified by the offer of salvation if it also is extended to all. But it would be very different if there were hundreds of millions who at their birth were placed in the state of sin without there ever being afforded them the possibility of passing into the state of grace, because they had not heard anything of salvation in Christ. Then would the thought be awful, that they were born as sinners, and therefore must assuredly be damned. In order to suppose this, we must inevitably accept the doctrine of the Reformers, that God from all eternity (or, at any rate, from the date of the Fall¹)

¹ As is well known, there is within the camp of those who suppose a foreordination (*Predestinatio*), conflict as to whether this determination dates from all eternity (*P. supralapsaria*), or only from the Fall and with the Fall as its presupposition (*P. infralapsaria*).

had destined these millions to everlasting damnation. But against this revolting theory stand the definite and distinct declarations of Scripture,—that God has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from His way and live” (Ezek. xxxiii. 11); God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. ii. 4); “The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. iii. 9).

Our old Church teachers have therefore concluded: God will save all, and since salvation cannot take place excepting by His gracious call reaching them, then this call must be general, universal. They have, consequently, definitely maintained the universality of the call, and asserted that God not only intends it for all, but that it also actually comes to all. But when they found it necessary to thoroughly establish this contention, they were faced with insuperable difficulties which only their weakness in exegesis and history enabled them to conceal from themselves. They ventured, for instance, to make such averments as these: The call of God has been universal several times in the history of the human race, and therefore has come to the whole of humanity existing at these times. It was universal in the days of Adam, when there were no other mortals excepting him and his family, who consequently all received the gospel in the form of the first promise, “the seed of the woman,” etc. (Gen. iii. 8 *et seq.*). It was universal again in the time of Noah, when that “preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. ii. 5) had the whole human family with him in the Ark. And it was universal a third time, in the days of the apostles (Mark xvi. 15; Rom. x. 18; Col i. 6). And if it became universal in these three generations, then it has also indirectly come to their successors.¹ In our day, at least, it is easy to see that this kind of argument is futile; for in the time of the apostles the call most certainly did not reach all who were then living.² The words which

¹ So the famous dogmatist Qvenstedt and others with him.

² Some have even taken the trouble to “prove” that the gospel even in the apostolic age must have reached the aboriginal inhabitants of America.

were heard by Adam and Noah, moreover, were a very imperfect call, indeed, to Christ. But even if a really saving call in these three epochs had come to all, of what avail would that have been to all intermediate and later generations? And consequently, the more recent orthodox theologians in our Church, who have observed this, have either confined themselves to saying: The universality of the call is a necessary presupposition, a postulate which must be assumed, on the ground of the testimony of Scripture regarding God's universal saving will on the one hand, and of the scripturally established truth on the other, that this saving will cannot be realized for the individual unless God's call actually reaches him; but how this happens we cannot say, for it is a fact that at the present day it has only reached comparatively few, or at most a minority of mankind. Here, then, we stand in the presence of a mystery we cannot solve.¹ Or some have even ventured to draw inferences from such suppositions, and said: Since it must be assumed that God's gracious call will come to all, and this demonstrably does not take place in this life, we reasonably enough infer that it must take place after death, for there is no third possibility; and we believe we are the more justified in drawing this conclusion, that God's Word actually says that Christ "preached unto the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 18-20), and that the gospel was "preached also to them that are dead" (1 Pet. iv. 6). Probably the majority of modern theologians also argue thus.

We shall, later on, return to these two passages. Here we only add, that it seems impossible to avoid arriving at the conclusion indicated without altogether doing violence to one's reasoning faculties. If the presupposition that the

¹ So, too, Professor Johnson: "This universality of the call of grace we must, in opposition to every particularist view of it, maintain as a postulate of the faith, even if we are unable to show how it actually does reach every individual." He adds, that he can neither regard this call as realized through the revelation which is vouchsafed to every one in conscience and the dealings of God, nor dare he assume any continuation of the call in another world. He will therefore not even attempt to find a solution of the mystery, and that is certainly the most judicious course. (*Vide Johnson's Grundriss of den system. Theologi*, pp. 114, 115).

call must be assumed to be universal, and that in this life it does not reach all, is correct,—and on that point we are all agreed,—the conclusion seems to follow of itself. And this very conclusion becomes the strongest reason we have for the hope that those who have not been called in this life will receive a call to salvation after death.

But yet it must be remembered that such a conclusion, however logical and intelligible it may seem to be, has not by any means the same validity as a direct Scripture testimony. Certainly the conclusion is drawn from two other truths which must be acknowledged to be proved from Scripture, but still there may be here some fallacy which we have been unable to detect. For there are in our Christian faith several points to which the laws of logic cannot be applied (*e.g.*, the doctrine of the Trinity). It would give us an altogether different security if it could be proved that Scripture expressly, and with clear and direct words, taught us that they who have not here received any gracious call from God will receive such a call after death. But lacking such a declaration, we must be allowed to attempt to draw inferences from other truths established in Scripture, and from these derive a hope for the salvation of the heathen.

We come to essentially the same conclusion by starting from another truth clearly warranted in Scripture, viz., that at the last day Christ shall judge men according to His word. “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day,” the Lord Himself says when He speaks of the one who will not receive His words (John xii. 47, 48). At that day, acquittal or condemnation will depend on whether men have received or rejected the Saviour, as He manifests Himself and His salvation through His words. Sinners will not be condemned for their sin, but for their unbelief, which really consists in this, that they will not allow themselves to be saved from their sins. That they resist the Saviour’s call is, according to Scripture, the real ground of their condemnation. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light” (John iii. 19). But the light of which Jesus here speaks is Himself. He said of Himself, “I am the light of the world” (John viii. 12);

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John ix. 5). To reject Him after He has been revealed is to reject the light after it has begun to shine, and to do that is judgment, *i.e.* is the true ground of condemnation (*cf.* 1 Pet. iv. 17). But from this it seems to follow that all must have had an opportunity of seeing that light; in other words, that that light really comes to them before they can be judged according to their relation to that light, whether to salvation or to damnation. That seems likewise to be clearly enough expressed in such passages as Acts xvii. 30, 31, where it is said that God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in which Christ "will judge the world in righteousness." Just as the relation to Christ is the true ground of salvation to all who are saved, so that seems also to be the true ground of condemnation to all who are condemned. Belief or unbelief in relation to Him becomes the decisive element. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not is condemned already" (John iii. 18-36). "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. x. 14). And so by this road we reach the same conclusion, that the gospel, the message of salvation, testimony concerning Christ, must come to everyone before the final judgment can be passed upon him. If it does not reach him in this life, then we see no other conclusion than that it will come to him after death.

Finally, man's free will points in the same direction. As a being created free and for freedom, man must receive the opportunity of choosing before his eternal destiny can be decided. Certainly the original freedom has been lost by sin, but it is the calling and preparing task of grace to restore freedom so far that a choice can again become possible. Therefore the call must come to all in order that all may freely choose life or death.

Although, according to the whole line of thought in the present discussion, it may seem superfluous, we shall again direct special attention to the fact that here we have only been speaking of those whom the gospel has not reached during their lifetime. None of those who have received the

call in this life has any right to console himself with the possibility of a conversion after death; for the call has already both come to him and been rejected by him. The word of Christ, according to which the sentence shall be passed, has already been heard by him. Since he has not been willing to believe that word, he has thereby made his choice, and has become ripe for judgment. None of the three considerations which have just been asserted with respect to the uncalled can benefit him in the least. For those who have "Moses and the prophets," yea, Christ Himself, and His apostles, the words of Abraham hold good: "Let them hear them." If they will not hear them, neither would they repent though a dead man return to life and testify to them, he says (Luke xvi. 29-31); and we might doubtless add: Nor would they repent if a call were given to them in the kingdom of death; but, as we have already shown, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that such will be the case. The opportunity of and susceptibility to a call of grace disappear at death in the case of all those who have only abused this their time of grace.¹

We know well enough that there are some who have supposed that although the rich man was one of those who had heard God's Word in this life, yet there is much to suggest that he was in such a state as gave hope of salvation. They have pointed to his supposed remorse over a wasted life, his anxiety for help from Father Abraham, therefore from the abode of the blest, and finally, his solicitude for his brothers. They have even gone so far as to say that his prayer was really heard, and that Christ actually granted it. In him, forsooth, a dead man really returned to the earth, and in him was erected a bridge over "the great gulf fixed," by his going both to Paradise (Luke xxiii. 43) and to "the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 18 *et seq.*).² However, on

¹ At this point we must take our stand as distinctly opposed to authors like Farrar (*Eternal Hope*), and many others, who keep the possibility of a salvation after death open even for such as had received the call in this life, and even sometimes extend the possibility to "the time after the judgment," *i.e.* to eternity.

² So, *e.g.*, Professor Granfelt in his eschatological work, *De yttersta Tingen*, pp. 118-22.

closer examination it will soon appear that this view is not tenable. For there is not a single word said about remorse for his sin, although he grieved at the torment he endured, which was its result. From Abraham he did not ask for spiritual light and help, but only for relief from his pangs. His apparent solicitude for his brothers does not specially redound to his credit. The very fact that the solicitude was merely on behalf of his brothers, and not of all other sinners who were similarly hastening to perdition, seems to indicate that his affection was only another form of self-love. In the next place, the conviction that their condemnation would increase his own torment, because he probably was in great measure to blame for that condition of theirs (by his bad example in this life), may possibly have been the real ground of his solicitude for them. And still further, his prayer in reality contains a direct charge against God; for if his brothers could only be saved if a dead man appeared to them, then it was actually not his own fault that he had not repented,—it was the fault of God, who had not given him such a messenger whilst he was alive. And so far from it being the case that his prayer was really heard, Abraham, on the contrary, definitely rejects it. That Christ did arise from the dead, and “went and preached unto the spirits in prison,” is a totally different matter, which Scripture nowhere places in connection with this narrative.

To these suggestions we must confine ourselves, since here we cannot enter more fully into the details of the parable.¹

But even if there thus seems to be reason for hoping that after death a call of grace may be heard by those who have not received it in this life,—and only by them,—it of course does not consequently follow that all these will be saved. If that were the case, then it might not matter how few received it in this life. But beyond the grave there must be the same opportunity as here of accepting or rejecting the call. If the choice is to be a really free choice, there

¹ We again refer to Dean Qvisling's book, also to the thorough discussion of this subject by Archbishop Trench in his *Parables of the Lord*. Besides, there is a multitude of special books, treatises, and sermons dealing with the parable in a more or less capable and satisfactory manner.

must also still be the opportunity either of receiving or rejecting the offer of salvation; and when the decision has finally been made, then, too, "the day of grace will be over." Whether beyond the grave it will be more easy or more difficult than in this life to decide for salvation we do not know. Probably the conditions will be essentially the same, although perhaps the form of the hindrances and requirements may be different. Only provided that the opportunity of salvation for all is essentially equally easy, or equally difficult, can there be perfect justice all round without "respect of persons." Nor do we know anything as to how often or how long the offer of salvation will be made in the life beyond. But, at all events, we can hardly conceive of the day of grace, for those who in this life did not hear the gospel, being extended until the judgment day. For then the great majority of them would have a far longer period of grace than we. Just as little dare we assume, as a matter of course, that it will be equally long for all; for such is not the case, even in the present life. The Lord there, as here, will know best when a sufficient time has been given, and will interrupt the work of salvation when He finds that the time for it for each individual has come. And that is what He at present does with us in Christendom.

And now we come to the last great question in this section. Does Scripture tell us anything about the method in which God's call after death will come to them who have not received it in this life?

The answer to this depends essentially on our interpretation of two passages of Scripture, to which, in passing, we have already referred, viz., 1 Peter iii. 18 *et seq.* and iv. 6.

The latter passage, which we shall find it more convenient to consider first, runs thus: "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." In the Revised Version it reads: "For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

A superficial consideration might lead us to say: In this passage we certainly have a clear testimony that salvation will likewise be offered to the dead, for there is evident mention here of a preaching of the gospel to them.¹ But if the gospel was preached to them, then they must also be able to repent and be saved. Is this, then, actually a direct Scripture testimony for the possibility of conversion after death?

Well, so it might seem. But yet the case is not so very clear. The passage is obscure, and has been expounded in very various ways. The main question is practically this: What are we to understand by "the dead"? To this at least three different answers have been given:

1. By this must be understood "the spiritually dead," some have said.¹ Now it certainly cannot be denied that Scripture speaks about those "spiritually dead," and even simply calls them "dead men," or "dead" ("dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 2; "dead while she liveth," 1 Tim. v. 6; "hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," Rev. iii. 1). But all the same, it is quite impossible to take the word in this sense here. The little word "for" refers us back to verse 5, where it is said that Christ is to "judge the quick and the dead." Of course, the expression "dead" must be understood in the same sense in both passages; and that in verse 5 it signifies the corporeally dead is perfectly undoubted. The passage, too, would be altogether without significance if we were to take the expression in the sense of spiritually dead; for it is a matter of course that the gospel everywhere must first be preached to the spiritually dead, and it is the gospel itself which is to bring them to life.

2. It is certainly of the spiritually dead that it is here said that the gospel was preached to them, but we must remember that it was preached to them while still alive, even if at the time Peter wrote they were already dead. The meaning would therefore be, that the gospel had been preached to them in their lifetime in order that they might be able to live an everlasting life according to God, in the spirit, although, so

¹ This is the view of some old English theologians, such as Whitby, Doddridge, etc.; but modern writers have nearly all given it up as impossible.

far as concerned their bodily part (at the death of the body), they had been overtaken by the doom which lies in death as the wages of sin, yea, in a special degree seemed to be the subject of it (through sufferings, persecutions, and martyrdom).¹

We must confess that when we had read Professor Zetzschwitz's learned treatise,² which asserts this very old view with much vigour, we felt almost persuaded by his great erudition and acumen. But when again, and once again, we pondered over the passage, and tried to the best of our ability to weigh the reasons for and against, we were at last unable to find complete satisfaction in the explanation; for there are strong reasons against it. In the first place, it would be strange if the apostle, in referring to what happened to the dead, spoke of something which, as a matter of fact, happened to the living, who only later, after it had happened, had died. In the next place, it would be very singular if he designated those few Christians who at that time had already fallen asleep as the dead. He ought, then, rather to have said: Some of us who have now fallen asleep, or, those of us who are now dead. It is certainly true that he does not use the article, *i.e.* he does not say "the dead," but "dead." But that does not signify anything, since it can readily be shown that the expressions "quick and dead" in the New Testament are used in the same sense as "the quick and the dead," consequently of the whole class of living and dead persons (*vide* ver. 5, and Acts x. 42; Rom. xiv. 9; 2 Tim. iv. 1). And then this view can only with difficulty be reconciled with the line of thought of the whole passage, especially with the immediately preceding verse, where it is said that Christ is "ready to judge the quick and the dead"; for when in verse 6 it is said that for this cause (*viz.*, that Christ should be able to judge both quick and dead) was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, the expression "dead" at the latter place must likewise designate all those who at the Lord's advent are dead, and not only the

¹ Such is the view of certain recent commentators, who imagine that in this way they can give sense to the wording of the passage without encouraging "the dangerous doctrine" of "conversion after death."

² *Petri apostoli de Christi ad inferos descensu sententia.*

few who died between Pentecost and the time when Peter wrote his letter, and to whom the gospel was preached whilst they were still alive.

3. "The dead" must be understood, as the words indicate, of the corporeally dead in general, and so the sense will be that the gospel has been preached to them as dead men, *i.e.* after their death. Since we have had to reject the two previous views, and there is scarcely a fourth possibility, we must accept this third one, which alone seems to us to give the words of the text something like their due. One day Christ is to judge all men, quick and dead; therefore, too, His gospel is preached to all, not merely to the living but also to the dead (1 Pet. iv. 5, 6). All will certainly have the opportunity of salvation, and on that very account will be subjects of the judgment which is to be passed upon all according to their relation to the offered salvation. Here once more we meet the thought which we have already indicated, that a universal proclamation of salvation is the prelude and condition of a general judgment, yea, that this preaching must have Christ as its subject, because it is He who is to be the Judge, and it is the relation to Him which will mainly be taken into consideration at the judgment.¹

In the next place, we must observe that we are not told that the gospel has been or will be preached to the dead, but that it was preached. There is evident reference to an act which had already taken place when the apostle wrote. But this cannot be anything other than what is treated of in 1 Peter iii. 18–22, the descent of Jesus to the kingdom of the dead, to which we mean to refer in some detail. That in this passage (iv. 6) there actually is reference to the same subject as in iii. 18–22 appears not merely from the clear line of thought which, on the whole, exists between the two passages, but also from the strange similarity in the expressions. In iii. 18 there is mention of Christ as the one

¹ Such is the view of the majority of later commentators, likewise of nearly all who have made these questions the subject of special and exhaustive discussion. Thus, *e.g.*, Güder, Oertel, and Kliefoth here practically agree, however much in other points they differ from each other.

who was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"; and in iv. 6 it is said of those to whom the gospel was preached, that "they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." In the former passage there is mention of preaching unto the spirits in prison (in Hades); in the latter, of a preaching of the gospel to the dead. Manifestly the same subject is dealt with in both passages.

Exceedingly obscure are the closing words in iv. 6: "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." We cannot here stay to examine the many different explanations which have been given of these utterances, especially as they are based on one or other of the three views of the expression "dead" in iv. 6 to which we have just referred, but will limit ourselves to a brief indication of what we find expressed in these words from the standpoint set forth on page 193 (3). If we take the expressions, flesh and spirit, in the same significance here as they evidently have in the parallel passages (iii. 18), viz., as relating to the corporeal life and the spiritual life, we shall find the meaning of the words to be this, that if those dead before the descent of Christ were already overtaken by the judgment (the judgment which lies in temporal death as the wages of sin), according to their corporeal life in a human way (*i.e.* as it happens to sinful men, who must all die), then the gospel was now preached to them (by the Lord at His descent) in order that, according to their spiritual life, they might live in a divine way (*i.e.* in such a way as the soul can live with and in God).

This, however, only expresses the purpose of this preaching of the gospel to them, without saying anything about the success of many or few of them in reaching that goal. Such success, of course, depended on whether they believed the good tidings and turned to the Lord. This, again, to an important degree was dependent on the faithfulness with which they had employed the faint light they already had received in their earthly life, because for these the earthly life cannot be supposed to have been without great significance, even if they had lacked light sufficient to lead them to Christ

and thereby to salvation. But on this point the apostle does not express himself further, since that does not affect the leading thought of the passage, which is to maintain that Christ was right in judging both quick and dead because His salvation had been preached even to the latter (iv. 5, 6).¹

We now leave this passage and turn to the cognate passage in 1 Peter iii. 18-22, where Christ is represented as the one who was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

This passage is one of the most difficult and most debated in the Bible; yet it appears to us to be not so obscure as to prevent one, by careful consideration, from arriving at some sort of certainty about its meaning. It is necessary to devote a little attention to it, since one clause of our creed ("descended into hell") exclusively rests upon the verses under consideration.

Before closely examining the apostle's words we must definitely reject the attempt which has been made to altogether explain away the important bearing they have upon the question with which we are occupied. It has, for instance, been said that here there is only reference to a preaching which Christ, by the Holy Spirit through Noah (the "preacher of righteousness," 2 Pet. ii. 5), immediately before the Deluge, vouchsafed to the men of that day, whilst they were still alive.² It will be noticed that this is essentially the same artifice as was tried with chapter iv. 6, where the preaching of the gospel to the dead, according to some, should be interpreted as being in reality a preaching to the living, except that the device shows itself to be still more impossible here than in that passage, as we shall now attempt to prove.

Against such a view the following absolutely decisive reasons speak:—

1. It is nowhere said in Scripture that Christ *preached*

¹ So, too, practically Kliefoth, *Eschatologie*, pp. 101 *et. seq.*; cf. Oertel, *Hades*, pp. 118-29.

² So, among others, Hofmann himself, and even Besser in the earlier editions of his exposition of this Epistle.

in the Old Testament; it is only said, that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets, and testified of His coming (1 Pet. i. 11).

2. The passage under immediate consideration nowhere says that this preaching was in the days of Noah. In those days the longsuffering of God waited on the repentance of these men; but the preaching to them was when they were already under custody, in "prison" (which is the actual significance of the original word *φυλακῇ*; in other words, in the kingdom of death, Hades). When we say of one, that he preached to them who "were in prison," we do not mean that he once had preached to them before they were thrown into prison. To put such a meaning into the words would be to do violence to them.

3. The context makes such a view quite impossible. What is it that is spoken of in the whole passage, verses 18-22? There is only reference to the different stages in the life of God's Incarnate Son,—death and quickening (ver. 18), resurrection (ver. 21) and ascension into heaven (ver. 22). And then, between the quickening and the resurrection we get some information about what Christ accomplished through Noah in the days of the Deluge! He who would attribute to the apostle such a confusion of thought may as well give up at once all attempts to interpret Scripture.

We therefore maintain that the passage speaks of something which the Saviour did between His own death and resurrection. If we are to define the period more exactly, we must say that it was between the quickening and the resurrection; for when it is said that He was "quickened by the Spirit, by which also He went and preached," this must be regarded as implying that His Spirit first reanimated the dead body, and thereafter He went as the quickened One—consequently, the whole Christ with soul and glorified body—and preached to the spirits in prison. This took place before His resurrection, only in so far as we by this understand the return of the quickened Christ to the earth and His manifestation to men on the earth. This act is, of course, no step in His humiliation, but the first step in His exaltation after the whole work of redemption had been completed.

But probably the reader will now ask: Where did the soul of Jesus go when He bowed His head in death? It went to Him to whom He Himself consigned it when He said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). It went to the Paradise of God, to the place of which He Himself shortly before had spoken when He said to the malefactor: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). That was the last step in His humiliation, in so far as it was connected with His becoming, as our substitute and redeemer, "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15). As such He must also be like us in this, that His soul went to the abode of the dead. But since He had now quite completed the work of redemption (*cf.* His saying on the cross: "It is finished"), He was free from the guilt He for our sake had borne, and so His soul stood, according to His human nature, in essentially the same position as the souls of pious mortals whose sins by a blissful death had been done away with (only that His soul from the beginning had been pure), and it must therefore go to the abode of the pious. Consequently, it is evidently a misunderstanding to suppose that this descent was a going down to the pains of hell, that Christ might endure there for us the pangs of everlasting death. Of this there is not the slightest hint in Scripture. Certainly the Apostle Peter, in his speech at Pentecost, says that David had prophesied the resurrection of Christ, since he assumed that "His soul was not left in hell" (Acts ii. 31). But the connection shows that this hell is Hades, or the kingdom of the dead. Peter is arguing from an Old Testament passage (Ps. xvi. 8 *et seq.*), and therefore also speaks the language of the old covenant, according to which the kingdom of death (Sheol, Hades) is a general expression for all that lies beyond the grave.

In the clause of our Creed concerning Christ's descent certainly no distinction has been drawn between the two quite separate stages in that section of the life of Jesus which lie between His death and resurrection, but the whole has been called His going down to the kingdom of death (in the Norwegian translation, "the descent to hell"), an expression

which is undoubtedly very misleading, and has not a trace of warrant either in Scripture or in the Greek and Latin originals of the Creed.¹ Only in recent times have we arrived at any greater clearness on this point; now it is generally acknowledged that the one belongs to the humiliation of Christ and designates His soul's departure to the abode of the spirits of the blest, to which His promise to the penitent thief refers, whilst the other is the going to Hades of the whole glorified person of Christ, in order to preach to the spirits who there were in custody ("in prison"),² and therefore essentially belongs to the exaltation. That this has become the common opinion in recent times is due not least to the clear and profound elucidation of this question in the work of Professor Zezschwitz.³

We must therefore conclude that, according to that passage, it was the quickened Christ who, with soul and glorified body, went and preached to the spirits.

¹ Concerning the Apostles' Creed, we refer to A. Hahn's *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln*, pp. 2-59 (1st ed.). Of the different forms of the Confession therein referred to, dating from the very earliest times, it is seen that in the oldest forms this clause is altogether lacking; and those which do contain it only speak of a "descent to the kingdom of death" (not to hell). The strangest feature is that the very form in which it is first met (in the Church at Aquileia) lacks the clause about burial, which has given rise to the suspicion that originally the "descent" simply implied that Christ was buried. Cf. hereon, Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*, Art. V. 1 *et seq.*, and the many Creeds which have been mentioned by Professor Caspari both in *Theol. Tidsskrift*, and especially in his *Ungedruckte . . . Qvellen*, where he distinctly declares this clause to be a later addition by the Western bishops of the ancient Church (*Qvellen*, ii. p. 274).

No passage of Scripture exists which speaks of a descent to hell. Possibly, however, this misleading expression has found its way into the Creed in this way, that at the time it was inserted it had a different meaning from that now given to it. Both the German "Hölle" and the old Scandinavian "Hel" had originally the same signification as the kingdom of death (in reality, *the hidden*).

² So, *e.g.*, the worthy and extremely cautious Norwegian, Professor Johnson, who treats of the former under Christ's humiliation (*Grundrids*, p. 219), and the latter under His exaltation (pp. 220, 221).

³ It is with some surprise that we see one like Weiss still contesting this. He seems to overlook the significance of the expression *quickened*, and thinks that the Spirit in which Christ went and preached to the spirits was not His soul, which had quickened the body, but the fulness of the Spirit (the communication of the Holy Ghost) with which He had been anointed and consecrated to His messianic work (*Biblische Theol. d. Neuen Test.*, sec. 48, d.).

Now, *to whom* was it that He preached?

Our text only mentions the souls of those who in the days of Noah had been disobedient, unwilling to believe the threatening of the Lord about the coming judgment through the testimony of Noah, and to repent during the long period of one hundred and twenty years which God in His long-suffering gave them as a time of grace before the judgment burst over them (Gen. vi. 3). But was it only to these? That would *per se* be unreasonable, and it will be quite inadmissible if we compare this passage with 1 Peter iv. 6, which we have already carefully considered; for there mention is made of a preaching to the dead in general. When the apostle here specially mentions those from the days of the Deluge, that might be due to his previous reference to Christ (in the beginning of ver. 18), the just suffering death for the unjust; for when, from the history of the human race, he would give an example of wicked and unjust persons, there could be none more striking than those notorious evil-doers from the time of the flood, and there could be offered no better proof of the importance of His work for all that were unrighteous than that even these were included.

Then it may be asked: *What* did He preach? On that point the passage says nothing. It is quite true that attempts have been made to indicate the subject of that preaching from the Greek word employed (*κηρύττειν*), which is translated by "preach," since that, as a rule, implies a preaching of the gospel. However, the word itself only means to proclaim something, to be a herald, and it does not of necessity follow that it is "good news" which is announced. Rather, from the nature of the case might one infer what was preached to them. What did Jesus preach when He was in the world? First and foremost, Himself. "I am the light of the world." "Come unto Me." "He that believeth on the Son hath life." And the apostles again and again declare the burden of their preaching to be Christ, the crucified and risen again. Is it likely, then, that Christ preached anything else to the spirits in Hades? Even in Hades almost certainly He Himself and His completed work were the subjects of His preaching. His mere

presence as the quickened One was in itself a preaching on the subject, without words (a personified sermon). But even allowing this, it is not therefore granted that it was only a preaching of the gospel. Of Christ it holds good, even in this world, that He is set for "the fall and rising again of many." For those who had already arrived at such a state of hardness of heart that they could not believe on Him, Christ's presence and preaching would, like every testimony about the saving truth, only be to judgment; for whosoever believeth not the Son is condemned already. And there might easily be, even amongst those who had not yet heard the gospel, many who had already advanced so far in self-blindness and hostility to the light they had received, that they were no longer able to believe; and there were assuredly others who, being still able to believe with the aid which the mere call to salvation would afford, yet of their own free will rejected salvation.

Some, in opposition to the view here set forth, have maintained that in this passage there is merely a reference to the proclamation of judgment; but they have practically been led to this by the fact that the apostle only mentions as the subjects of judgment such as had not merely in a special manner distinguished themselves for their wickedness, but had even during their life known and disdained the patience of God and the preaching of righteousness. But certainly too much importance has been given to this latter consideration. Undoubtedly they had for a long time been the subjects of God's longsuffering; but then, again, there was also passed upon them a judgment which is without parallel in history. And it is quite true that Noah had preached to them; but yet that had in all probability been a preaching of righteousness, in the sense that it was a reproof for their unrighteousness and a proclamation of God's avenging justice, but hardly any preaching of salvation, any invitation to believe on the Saviour. Practically those who were overwhelmed at the Deluge were, so far as their relation to Christ was concerned, still to be designated as belonging to the uncalled, and therefore they could also be the subjects of God's gracious call in Hades. This is not hindered by the

fact that they, in a peculiar sense, belonged to the "unrighteous," for, as has already been shown, there was a special reason for mentioning such as types of those for whom this preaching was intended, consequently this unrighteousness of theirs during their earthly life does not warrant us in concluding that here there can only be reference to a proclamation of judgment. The revelation which was afforded them during their earthly life was not so perfect that it must necessarily be looked upon as the final and conclusive one.¹ Nor are we able to see that the line of thought of the Epistle, on the whole, conflicts with the assumption that here there is merely mention of a preaching unto salvation, as some have thought.² No doubt the Epistle is an epistle of consolation; but there is a grander consolation for the believer than the hope of seeing those who in their earthly life were not believers going hopelessly and irredeemably to perdition for ever; and so, in truth, it does not greatly interfere with the Christian's joy that he sees a ray of hope even for those, rather it is the reverse, for to him such a hope is only a new reason for praise and gratitude.

After these remarks about the probable substance of this preaching, we ask: *For what purpose* did Christ preach in Hades?

The answer to this might appear to have been already given indirectly; for if the preaching was of such a character that it could be both for salvation and judgment, its purpose also appears to have been, according to circumstances, to operate in both directions. But that is not exactly a mere matter of course. For example, we find even in the

¹ We must here disagree with Kliefoth (*Eschatologie*, pp. 100 *et seq.*), who tries to maintain that the preaching to these could only be to judgment, whilst the preaching to others, according to 1 Peter iv. 6, was a real preaching of the gospel, which might be to salvation or to judgment,—a distinction in which, however, he has the majority of eschatologists against him.

² This view is strongly maintained in the treatise of Zezschwitz, to which reference has been made, and also in the translator's note to O. von Gerlach's exposition of the passage, in which we have a summary of all the arguments against the view of the passage which is favoured by the majority of modern writers, and which we ourselves have felt bound to accept, for the reasons given by us.

Word of God instances of a preaching which, according to its nature, might be for salvation, yet was really designed by God to be for judgment, since thereby it was to increase the already existing hardness of heart (*vide* Isa. vi. 9, 10; Matt. xiii. 10–15). Consequently, there is justification for setting the question as to the purpose of the preaching beside the question as to its substance.

When we seek in the passage under consideration an explanation of the purpose of this preaching to the spirits in Hades, we must look for it in the context, since there is nothing directly said about such purpose. And here again it is the immediately preceding words in verses 17 and 18 that can afford us any guidance. The apostle first maintains that it is better to suffer for well-doing¹ than for evil-doing (ver. 17), and he proceeds to show this by the example of Christ, who went so far in doing good to those who did evil, that He, the just, suffered death for those unjust ones. Now, the apostle seems to imply, by all that follows, that the preaching is a benefaction for those unjust ones, not for judgment upon them. This appears still more clearly when he continues, that Christ did this “that He might bring us to God.” Certainly this refers chiefly to His passion, but it seems likewise to tinge all the acts summed up in the subsequent clauses (quickenings, preaching in Hades, resurrection, etc.; *cf.* Rom. iv. 25: “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”), so that all of them were reckoned as elements in His attempt to bring us to God, to save us. Nor have we any right to limit “us” to those who are Christians; for the expression refers specially to His death, which was an atoning death for all, for the sin of the whole world (2 Cor. v. 19; 1 Tim. ii. 6). It appears to us, therefore, that the idea of the passage mainly points in the direction of a preaching with a saving purpose, which, however, does not exclude that for many—perhaps, even for the majority—it might be for judgment.²

¹ The word in the original (*ἀγαθοποιεῖν*) means chiefly to do good to others (Luke vi. 33, 35; Acts xiv. 17), and in this sense we take it also here, although we are quite aware that all are not agreed on this point.

² Whilst this view of ours is in accordance with that of the larger number,

Finally, we must refer to *the result* of this preaching in the kingdom of death. On this point Scripture is quite silent. But if it was a preaching concerning Christ with a saving purpose, we venture to assume that it happened there as it does here; in other words, that it was for salvation to some, and for greater judgment to others. Whether the former or the latter prevailed, we have no means of deciding; but the tendency in the one direction or the other depended on the receptivity of the individual souls, and that again partly on the revelation of the truth they had received during their earthly life, and partly on the attitude they had then taken up towards it. For those who in this life had possessed the full truth, and withstood it in unbelief until death, the preaching could only be to judgment, since it clearly manifested that the salvation they had rejected was the only and the true salvation. For the others, whose choice had not yet been made,—or could not be made, since a real and effectual call had not been given to them,—this preaching would just become a call, a call which they could either accept or reject; for even in Hades it must be the case that man as a free creature can only be saved by freely deciding for salvation. But this very call must set the will so far free as to make a choice possible. To what extent souls could be free to make this choice of salvation must be understood of the most distinguished of recent commentators and dogmatists, yet we do not desire to conceal the fact that the old orthodox Lutheran expositors regarded this preaching in Hades exclusively as a preaching of judgment, and this has found its expression in Pontoppidan's *Explanation of the Catechism*. The so-called *Revised Explanation* raised a storm of disapprobation by venturing to designate this preaching in Hades as a preaching of the gospel, which, at least in such a book and in the form it took, was certainly unwarranted. Concerning that conflict, we refer to Wexels' *Aabne Erklæring* (Open Declaration), which was published in Christiania half a century ago, and which is still valuable for its many quotations from the Church Fathers on this subject, although Wexels was greatly indebted to an old work by Dietelmaier. Professor Johnson, as was to be expected, sticks to the old view, that it was a preaching "to judgment for them who had disdained the tidings of God's saving grace" (*Grundrids*, p. 221), but without attempting to establish his position.

We might add, that Father Luther himself was more open-minded than the subsequent expositors who call themselves by his name. In an exposition of Hosea vi. 2, written shortly before his death, he designated this preaching as a preaching of the forgiveness of sins even to those who had been swept away by the Deluge. (In other places, however, his opinion is certainly different.)

stood to have depended partly on their earthly life (the measure of their knowledge and their fidelity to what they knew), and partly on their will in relation to the call at the moment they received it; which, again, must be understood to have depended to some extent on the development of their will during the earthly life, even if they had not during that life received the gospel call. Even amongst ourselves the nature of our will-power is to a considerable degree the result of a long process of development.

Of course there will here be so many degrees, transitions, and shades, that only the omniscient God can draw the boundary line between them.

In what way this preaching in Hades reached the spirits in prison it is difficult to conceive. Did it sound like a trumpet-call through the regions of the kingdom of the dead? Or was it only as a quiet thought-communication without words? Could it be merely a personified sermon—as our old Church teachers seemed to have imagined—consisting in the manifestation of the Saviour Himself there, as the dead and quickened, in such a manner that all who saw Him came to understand immediately both what He was and what salvation was? We do not know; only, we may be confident of this, that if it was necessary to manifest Himself to the dead, He certainly would do so in the right way and in a fitting manner.

And now, what was *the effect* of this preaching on those who believed it, and on those who did not?

It seems to follow from the nature of the case that those who by this preaching became believers were removed from Hades to the abode of the blest in the presence of God; in other words, they were transferred to the place whither all believers on the earth at a blissful death are removed. Many have considered that the same was the case with the souls of all the Old Testament believers, since they also at the mere sight of Christ became true believers, and passed to heaven from Hades where they had been awaiting the coming of Christ,¹ a view from which we have expressed

¹ Such is the opinion of nearly all the old Church Fathers, and some of the more recent theologians (*e.g.*, Kliefoth).

our dissent in the course of our consideration of the ideas of the Old Testament regarding the life that follows death (pp. 109–13). These had already entered into life, and therefore were not amongst the inhabitants of Hades to whom this preaching was addressed.

Yet we must assume that from this period an important change took place in the condition of those who now for the first time heard and rejected the offer of salvation; for now they had been face to face with Christ, and had taken up their attitude towards Him for ever. Now they were no longer merely non-believers, but unbelievers. Therefore also their guilt and their pangs must be other and greater than before.

On the other hand, as concerns those who during their earthly life had received and rejected God's gracious call, this preaching seems to have had no other result than to assure them unmistakably of the terrible blunder they had committed when they rejected the proffered salvation. When Kliefoth thinks that this preaching to these souls—with whom he reckons those who were overwhelmed at the Deluge—had the result that they were now transferred to another place, a real place of torment, which Hades in his opinion is not,¹ this opinion of his seems to lack foundation. For, in the first place, the New Testament recognizes no other abodes for souls between death and doomsday than Hades and heaven, as we have already sought to prove (pp. 147–58); in the next place, this preaching really cannot be said to have increased their responsibility or brought them to any new decision, for it did not contain for them any possibility of choice between salvation and perdition, since in this present life they had already made their choice. How then could it give rise to a new state and a new abode? There is therefore every reason to suppose that they still remained where they were, and in essentially the same state of condemnation and hopeless waiting for the final judgment as before; and consequently, Hades did not become empty after this preaching, as Kliefoth supposes.

And finally, we ask: What *significance* had this preaching

¹ *Vide* our observations in opposition to this on pp. 153, 154.

for succeeding generations? What significance had it for all the heathen who had not yet come to Hades, were not dead, when Christ preached there? There are millions who every year depart to Hades without any knowledge of God and His salvation. Had the preaching of Christ no significance for them? And if not, when will God's gracious call come to them?

Here, again, opinions diverge from each other very considerably. Many suppose that Christ not only preached in Hades, but even instituted a ministry there, so that now in Hades, as on the earth, there is constantly going on a preaching of the gospel, a calling to the kingdom of God; indeed, some have ventured to think that even there they have not only the Word but also the sacraments. Of all that, however, Scripture says not a word. If we were to suppose that there is such preaching, we must imagine the duty to be attended to either by angels or by blessed spirits whom God intrusts with this mission in the service of His kingdom. Under no circumstances can we suppose that this gracious call will continue its appeal to every individual soul right up to the judgment day, and that up to that time the soul will be capable of accepting the call; for then such a soul would enjoy a longer period of grace than any of those who were called during their earthly life. When the soul has decisively rejected the call, then by that rejection even here the possibility of salvation is certainly past. Those who accepted this call, we must suppose, were removed to the abode of the blest. However, it is to be observed that many of those who are of this opinion likewise share the view that all the dead, even the saved, remain in Hades until the judgment, although in different sections and states,—an opinion which, for reasons already given (pp. 115–18), we have been unable to adopt.

Others (like Kliefoth) have supposed that for the uncalled, for all who have died since the Lord Himself was in Hades, there will be no call except at the last day. For that day they must wait in a state of suspense. And so when the Lord appears in the clouds, and they are called to Him for judgment, they will at once realize who He is, and those of them who are able to accept a gracious call will receive

such a call by that very sight of the Saviour. They will immediately feel themselves drawn to Him; in faith they will receive Him and be saved. Kliefoth thinks that unbaptized children will receive the same call.

Concerning these opinions we merely say that they are only conjectures which have nothing in Scripture to support them, but which, at the same time, cannot be said to have anything in Scripture decidedly opposed to them.

The reader may be apt to lose sight of the main point amidst so much that is uncertain, so many views that are merely guesses and conjectures regarding the destiny of those who have not in this life received any call of God (any *vocatio specialis*) except the perfectly universal call (*vocatio generalis*) which lies in conscience, nature, and the providence of God, all of which combined cannot lead them to Christ as the author of salvation. In order, then, to keep that main point in view, we shall now, in conclusion, before leaving the subject, briefly repeat what seems to be established partly as certain, partly as probable, concerning this question, viz. :—

1. The teaching of Scripture regarding the universality of God's desire for the salvation of all, man's free will which points to the possibility of a choice, and the fact that the final judgment will depend upon the attitude which the individual has taken up towards Christ, all lead us to assume as probable, that all men at some time, either here or there, will be placed face to face with Christ and His gracious call, and will thereby be enabled to accept or reject the Saviour. But as to when and how this will take place we have little information.

2. According to 1 Peter iii. 18–22 it is certain that the quickened Christ immediately before His resurrection preached in the kingdom of death (Hades), and according to 1 Peter iv. 6 it is at least probable that this preaching held good of the dead in general, and was in so far a preaching of the gospel that He preached Himself.

3. It is probable that this preaching, to those not called during their earthly life, was a call of grace which made it possible for them to receive or reject salvation in Christ.

4. How many or how few attended to this call we do not

know, but we must suppose that the acceptance or rejection by individuals of this offer of salvation (the special call) depended essentially on their relation to God's preparatory call through conscience, creation (Rom. i. 19-21), and providence (Acts xiv. 17, xvii. 24-27).

5. It must be assumed that those who attended to this call were thereby saved, and that those who resisted it thereby became for ever sealed to perdition, and consequently from that time forward entered upon a worse state than their former one.

6. For those who died in faith or unbelief this preaching had apparently no real significance; for the former were not in Hades, and the latter were no longer able to receive any call of grace, consequently the manifestation of Christ to them could only be a more absolute assurance of their perdition on account of their rejection of salvation.

7. Whether this preaching of Christ in Hades likewise—as some have held—was the occasion and introduction of a continued preaching there, for all who had not been called in this life, till the end of days, or whether those who died later will be called by the Lord when He comes again to judgment, we do not know; and on the whole, we are quite ignorant of the form in which the call will be issued to the uncalled who have died after the preaching of Christ in Hades.

And, in conclusion, we wish to remark that if in the preceding pages we have quite disregarded several passages of Scripture which have been usually considered in connection with this subject (*e.g.*, Eph. iv. 8-10; Phil. ii. 10, 11; Col. ii. 15; Rev. v. 13), the reason is simply this, that we have not been able to convince ourselves that they have any, even the slightest, bearing on the subject. It is, in our opinion, only by a misunderstanding that they have been brought into connection with it.¹

Before we leave this point, perhaps we ought to meet an

¹ For a more minute examination of the question about the "Descent," reference is made, in addition to the already mentioned work by Zezschwitz, to the exhaustive, but at the same time less trustworthy, work of Güder, *Die Erscheinung Christi unter den Todten*; cf. especially pp. 15-126. Consultation may also be made of Oertel's *Hades*, and Bohn's *Om Tilstanden efter Døden*, pp. 27-42.

objection which we presume some readers will make, and which is of great practical importance.

If it is the case, it may be said, that the gospel will be preached beyond the grave to those who have not heard it here, why should we take the trouble to carry the gospel to them in this life? What is the advantage of foreign missions? There can be little necessity for engaging in mission work and little hazard in leaving it alone.

To this we answer :

(a) God has declared the necessity of it, and so we have no right to philosophize over what our duty regarding it may be. We have simply to do what He enjoins, to work in loyal obedience to Him and His Word, whether we see the use of it or not. We must say with Peter : " Master, at Thy word I will let down the net."

(b) Moreover, in the case before us it is even possible to see why God has enjoined us to take the gospel to the heathen. He could quite easily have done without our aid. Hosts of angels stand ever at His command. But He saw that our love would prompt us to help our erring brethren, and He likewise foresaw that this work in an eminent degree would benefit ourselves, advance our growth in grace, strengthen, encourage, gladden us, and He vouchsafed this blessing to us. Consequently, He handed over to us the work of evangelizing the world, and He only reserved to Himself the right to determine what should be done with those whom we did not reach with the tidings of salvation.

(c) We must not forget that nearly all we have said about an after-death preaching of the gospel to the heathen only turns upon a hope, a possibility, and is nowhere absolutely set forth as certain. But it is absolutely certain that we have received the Lord's command to take the gospel to the heathen, and the assurance that by doing so we may save them. Are we then to be so foolish as to give up the certain for the uncertain? Is that the true wisdom and the true love? Let us imagine that we are sailing past some shipwrecked sailors who are clinging to the keel of their upturned vessel. It is possibly the case that others may save them, even if we sail past them. But shall we leave

them, and have we the right to do so? That others may come and save them is an uncertain possibility; but that we are both able and bound to save them is our certain and bounden duty, and we act accordingly; and we condemn most sternly those who in similar cases act otherwise. Now such is exactly our relation to the heathen. We may entertain a hope that God will provide for them an opportunity for salvation without our co-operation, but yet that is only a hope and a possibility. On the other hand, what is certain is, that we both may and can help them, and that we should render aid as quickly as possible. That hope must not be a pillow for our indolence, but only a consolation against the despair which is apt to possess us when we think of the many who will pass away without knowledge of salvation, even if we exert ourselves to the utmost to convey to them the glad tidings.

There are some subjects which are related to our theme, but which in the preceding pages we have only been able casually to touch upon. The most important of these are purgatory, prayer for the dead, and the salvation of unbaptized children. To these, therefore, we now in conclusion turn our attention for a little.

1. PURGATORY (*Purgatorium, ignis purgatorius*)

At a very early period in the Church it had been observed that there were many who must be supposed to have died in the faith, yet whose Christianity was but feeble. The Church did not venture to hope that these would be allowed at once to enter heaven, and so there sprang up a tendency to believe that beyond the grave such individuals became the subjects of a purification. But still, it is not until the time of Pope Gregory the Great (*ob.* 604) that we meet with the fully developed doctrine of a purgatory. The idea gradually arose that there was a place on the confines of the real hell whither such souls went, and where in a blazing fire they must be tormented, partly that they might be cleansed of the unimportant, "pardonable" sins which they had not before death repented of and secured absolution for, partly that by suffering

they might make up for their escape from ecclesiastical penances for grievous sins. But during this torment they had still always the consolation that one day their pangs would have an end, even if these might endure for a long time; for all who were consigned to purgatory would at some time, sooner or later, enter heaven. The stay in purgatory might be curtailed by priestly masses, the prayers of the saints, the fasting of friends, the bestowing of alms and pilgrimages to holy places, on behalf of deceased relatives.

Scripture warrant for this theory was extremely weak. It was limited to the passage in the Apocrypha, 2 Maccabees xii. 43-46, and to some New Testament texts (*e.g.* Matt. v. 26; 1 Cor. iii. 15), which generally refer to entirely different matters, and at any rate afford no proof in support of the conception of purgatory. The main thing was that such a theory was a valuable prop for the Romish Church, since it increased its power by extending its influence even beyond the grave and brought clinking coin into its treasury (for soul-masses and indulgences for the dead). However, we cannot go fully into the details of this subject here, but must refer the reader to the symbolic books of the Roman Church (*Con. Trid.* VI. can. 30, and XXV.; also *Cat. Rom.*, P. I., c. VI. 3); to Chemnitz's *Examen Con. Trid.*, ed. Preuss, pp. 601-54; to Elliott's *Delineation of Romanism*, pp. 240-307; to Hase's *Polemik*, 4th ed., pp. 398 *et seq.*; and to Dr. Cumming's *Discussion*, pp. 342-97). The four authors just mentioned have given copious information regarding the history of the doctrine and material in abundance for refutation of it. The Romish defence of it, too, is excessively scant and feeble, even on the part of its most capable apologists. Reference hereon may be made, *e.g.*, to Möhler's *Symbolik*, secs. 23 and 52; also to the same author's *Neue Untersuchungen*, sec. 53.

The Reformers rejected this doctrine with great determination. Luther calls purgatory with all its belongings "a perfect delusion of the devil" (*Schm. Art.* II. 2. 12), and the old Lutheran Church teachers unanimously condemn it as conflicting with the Word of God. The same was the case with the Reformists (the leaders of the Reformed or Helvetic

Church, Zwingli, Calvin, etc.). Calvin, *e.g.*, calls purgatory a destructive satanic invention (*"exitiale Satanæ commentum," Inst. III. 5. 6*), and the symbolic books of the Reformed Church denounce the doctrine in unmeasured terms. On the other hand, some recent theologians in the Lutheran Church have shown a strange inclination to restore this doctrine, although in a new form. They are quite agreed that the Catholic Scripture warrant for it is quite untenable. They have abandoned altogether the idea of a material fire, as even the more intellectual Roman Catholic theologians (*e.g.*, Möhler) have done. Finally, it follows from their Protestant conception of the forgiveness of sin that they do not hold that suffering after death is for the purpose of giving satisfaction for unforgiven sins, or making up for insufficient ecclesiastical penances, and they have altogether rejected all the old papistical absurdity about masses for the soul and such like. But, nevertheless, they believe that the doctrine of purgatory has a sound kernel, which remains after all that they consider to be shell has been removed. They believe that even those who die a blissful death still need a purification in order to obtain freedom from the sin that yet clings to them. So, for example, Oertel, Rudloff, Rothe, Dörner, Kahnis, Martensen, Clausen, and others. We shall give some quotations from their utterances. Martensen (*Dogmatik*, sec. 276) says: "Though the Romish doctrine of purgatory is repudiated because it is mixed up with so many crude and false ingredients, yet it contains the truth, that the intermediate state must in a purely spiritual sense be a purgatory, designed for the purifying of the soul. . . . Even the blessed have still an inner history, need a purification." Clausen expressed himself similarly: "In this sinfulness, which men carry with them as a legacy from the earthly existence, lies the key to the Catholic doctrine of purgatory." After pointing out that "life even in the best is far from being so highly developed as to be able to receive the bliss which first fulfils the Christian's thoughts and longings," he says: "Such a purification, having its ground in human nature, must surely be a necessity for all" (*Exposition of the Main Doctrines*, p. 523). Rothe certainly admits that there

may be instances where the last traces of sinfulness in the soul disappear during the very process of death (*e.g.*, in the case of the martyrs during their tortures); but he thinks that these are only exceptions which merely hold true of some individuals whose lives were specially ripened in goodness, and who therefore experience a mode of death which is peculiarly fitted to sweep away the last relics of sin in the soul. The rule, however, must be assumed to be this, that only after death is there an absolute removal of all traces of the unholy elements which are found existing even in the believer's higher nature. "Perfectly to cleanse his spiritual being from all the material dross which still clings to it, and thereby also from all perishable elements, is the work which occupies the converted but imperfect dead in Hades." The work is even more definitely set forth in these words, "the dead in Hades, by the aid of God's grace and the Holy Spirit dwelling in him,—and probably also with the help of the spirits already perfected with whom he is associated,—in a normal way lays hold of and absorbs into his personality the matter belonging to him which hitherto had not been quite spiritualized, assimilates it,"—which, in Rothe's opinion, is only another expression for eliminating it as gross material substance (*Ethik*, sec. 801. 2). Kahnis (*Dogmatik*, 2nd ed., ii. 496) expresses himself in a way more intelligible to ordinary mortals: "In the conception of purgatory there lies undoubtedly a truth, viz., that for many Christians a purification is still necessary." . . . "Not small is the number of Christians who, as far as men can judge, hold the true faith, but whose faith is still so mingled with the traces of the old man that one is inclined to suppose that they cannot enter Paradise as they are, if it is to continue to be a Paradise."¹

We do not mean to weary the reader with more quotations, but only beg to draw attention to the fact that none of those modern Protestant scholars has even attempted to support such a theory by any words of Scripture. Indeed, it is not possible. What has led them to their view is exclusively this, that they have not been able to conceive

¹ Cf. also Oertel, *loc. cit.* pp. 69 *et seq.*, and the quotations from the correspondence between Dorner and Martensen, which we have already given on p. 58.

that death, which "is only a natural process," is able to remove the last remnant of sinfulness from the believer's soul. And it is quite certain that if one can neither assume this nor dare maintain, as some sects have done, quite contrary to God's Word, that the believer already in this life becomes free from sin, then he is involuntarily driven to the doctrine of a purgatory. The solution which Kliefoth suggests (*Eschatologie*, p. 87) does not help us out of the difficulty, for it is no solution. He thinks that the sins the believer has still left when he dies are then and there pardoned, and he is therefore at once done with them. But that is to mix up justification with sanctification. Undoubtedly the guilt of the sin is forgiven, but the sinful inclination is not thereby eradicated, and so long as that remains we are still unclean, and may be led to sin again, for lust bringeth forth sin (Jas. i. 14, 15). If we are to attain that holiness without which none can see the Lord, and in the true sense be amongst the pure in heart who shall see God, sinful desire must also be removed, and that only takes place by a forgiveness of sin. If we are to escape the theory of a purgatory, we must see in death itself a deliverance from the last remnants of sinful desire. And that is just what we have attempted to establish in our discussion on the question of the death of the body (pp. 51-8), to which the reader is referred.

It is true that Scripture does not say directly that death has such a purifying effect, except in so far as one may see such an idea in the somewhat obscure words in Romans vi. 7 ("He that is dead is freed from sin"), an interpretation, however, which the context scarcely warrants. But yet it follows from two other truths, clearly testified by Scripture, viz.—

(a) That no one in this life is free from sin (1 John i. 8).

(b) That the believer's soul at death goes home to God in heaven (*vide* 2 Cor. v. 6-8; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Phil. i. 23), where no unclean thing can be.

Consequently, the believer's soul at death must become quite clean, quite freed from its sin, and not merely from the guilt of sin.

This, too, has been the view of the Reformers, who

have, by implication, introduced this idea into the symbolic documents, even if only incidentally. It is said, for instance, in the *Apology*: "Death itself serves to destroy this sinful flesh" (Müller's *Book of Concord*, p. 196). And in the *Larger Catechism* it is said: "We expect that our flesh will fail, and with all its uncleanness be buried" (Müller, p. 458). But they have not followed this thought further or tried to show how the cleansing takes place. That is what we have attempted in the section treating of the effect of a blissful death to which we have just referred the reader.¹

But even if, for the reasons given, we reject the idea that after death there follows a purification for the believer, we have not thereby wished to deny that there is still a development, for that is something quite different, and rests on other grounds altogether. Every purification presupposes impurity; but a development only presupposes that imperfection which is characteristic of every creature in comparison with the All-perfect Creator, who, as such, cannot be susceptible of any development. Therefore we can well assume the latter even if we reject the former.

2. PRAYER FOR THE DEAD

It is very natural that we should wish to commend our dear ones to the lovingkindness of God even after they are dead. We have been so accustomed to pray for them whilst they lived, that it is somewhat difficult for us all at once, when they die, to give over the habit. Consequently, it is not strange that even in the Early Church we find men praying for the dead, and the custom can be traced as far back as the close of the second century. It was especially at the celebration of the Lord's Supper that they recalled to memory the deceased members of the congregation in their prayers, and on the anniversary of their deaths, particularly in the case

¹ The greatest of our old dogmatists, Johan Gerhard, seems to have had the same idea when, in the chapter about the purpose of death (*De fine mortis*), amongst other things he says, "Regeneration" (rather, justification) "removes the guilt of sin; renewal, its supremacy; death, the feeling of it; and the body's reduction to dust, its root, namely, the sinful nature" (*Loci Theol.*, t. viii. cap. 5).

of the martyrs. It is very probable that this custom may have had its share in leading men's thoughts to the conception of purgatory,¹ just as, on the other hand, it got new support from that conception. There was, in other words, a reciprocity between these two. Prayer for the deceased led naturally to the thought that they were in some kind of distress or pain in which they would be the better of intercession, and the notion of this supposed distress (the pangs of purgatory) must have had the effect, as soon as it sprang up, of urging their friends on to prayer for them. Many old liturgies contain such prayers.

The Reformers distinctly rejected the doctrine of purgatory; they did not so distinctly denounce intercession for the dead. The reason may be that this idea was of much older origin than the other, that it was regarded as in comparison practically harmless, and that it was considered only as an immediate expression of the feelings of affection towards the dead. They were satisfied when they got masses for the soul abolished. In the *Apology*, Art. 12, which treats of this subject, runs thus: "Now, as concerning the fact that our opponents, with respect to intercession for the dead, appeal to the Fathers, we know, indeed, that the ancients spoke of prayers for the dead such as we do not forbid." Luther expressed himself in his great *Confession* on the subject of the Supper thus: "Since Scripture does not say anything about prayer for the dead, I do not consider it a sin if a man in his private devotions prays in terms like these: Dear Lord, if it is the case that this soul can be helped, then do thou graciously, etc., and when this has been done once or twice let that suffice." In other passages (*e.g.*, in his *Sermon on the New Testament*) he seems to express himself still more approvingly of such prayer. But the later Protestant Church teachers definitely disapprove of praying for the dead; and this has especially been the case in the Lutheran Church. In the Anglican Church, however, the Catholic custom was retained much longer. Thus we find in the Anglican Service-book for 1549 both a general prayer that God might be gracious to all those who had died and given

¹ Cf. on this point Archbishop Whateley's *Errors of Romanism*, pp. 103, 104.

evidence of faith, and a special prayer for each individual at his burial: "Grant unto this Thy servant that the sins which he committed in this world be not imputed to him." In the present Anglican Service-book, which dates from 1662, that petition is not found; but yet in the English Episcopal Church there has been a certain tendency to pray for the dead. Several of its famous men (*e.g.* Thorndike, Isaac Barrow, and Archbishop Usher, and others) have expressed their approval of such prayer, and it is believed that the great Dr. Johnson used to pray for his deceased friends thus: "O Lord, if I may do so, I commend to Thy paternal love my father, my brother," etc. But it is quite apparent that that was a very conditional and uncertain prayer. The ritualists, of course, in this, as in other respects, are inclined to imitate Rome.

In recent times, even within our own Norwegian Church, some have begun to take up a freer attitude towards this question. Certainly some of our greatest theologians (such as Thomasius, Hofmann, Frank) have distinctly maintained the old Protestant view, and pronounced against all prayer for the dead as being both useless and inadmissible; but then, there are others who think such prayer should be regarded as a matter of comparatively little importance, and that one may so pray or not according to his pleasure. This is what Kahnis says: "The right of intercession for the dead, which the Early and the Mediæval Church exercised, may not be denied to anyone who feels prompted so to pray" (*Dogmatik*, ii. p. 501). Almost in the same way, but more cautiously, Wexels expresses himself. When he speaks of bidding the last farewell to the dead, he adds: "If in the desire for the weal of the deceased one sees an intercession for the dead, such an intercession is a direct result of natural as well as of Christian love, which cannot avoid desiring blessing for the deceased as for those still living. But it is self-evident that intercession must never be made so that the hearers thereof may reasonably find in it support for a foolish hope that repentance is possible after death" (*Pastoraltheologi*, p. 285).

It must be apparent from what we have said that, so far as we are concerned, we can find warrant for no other

intercessory prayer for our dead than that which has for its object the believer's development (*N.B.*, not purification) in the intermediate state; and we believe that even such a prayer ought to be avoided, since our knowledge regarding this development is so meagre that we cannot easily pray for it with that confidence and assurance of being heard which a true prayer demands. For conversion, forgiveness of sins, etc., we cannot pray, since our loved ones who have died in peace no longer need these, and the impenitent cannot have them, so that in either case it would be futile and only occasion misunderstanding. A general commendation of the dead to God's mercy is certainly the only prayer of which in such cases there can be any suggestion, but not even for such a commendation—however natural it may seem to be *per se* as an immediate expression of our affection for the deceased and our trust in God—is it possible to find a rational ground or a valid Scripture warrant. The only prayer which may with full confidence be said to have a warrant at all, is a prayer of thanksgiving, of gratitude for what God has done for the deceased person, and for what he by God's grace has become. But even with regard to this latter point it is necessary to observe that there must be perfect truth in the thanksgiving. Otherwise, by such thanksgiving it might, as a matter of fact, so happen that we thanked God for the perdition of an unbelieving soul. Consequently, it is not wise to introduce into the funeral service, which is to be used at every grave, a thanksgiving for the death of a Christian. We have a sample of this in the Anglican Service for the dead, according to which at every grave the priest shall say: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of His great mercy, to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, . . . we give Thee hearty thanks," etc. This sounds beautifully enough at a real Christian's burial. But is it suitable at every grave? Several years since an Anglican clergyman was sentenced to be suspended from his cure because he refused to utter these words at the funeral of a man who had died in a state of drunkenness.¹ It is undoubtedly the wisest thing in such general thanks-

¹ Hagenbach's *Liturgik*, pp. 183, 184.

givings for the dead to follow the example which is given in the new Norwegian liturgy, where it is said : " We thank Thee for all Thy servants who in Thy faith and in Thy fear have departed this life."

These remarks, of course, only hold good of such as have died in Christendom. With the heathen, who have received no call from God in this life, the case is altogether different. For if we entertain the hope that after death they may become the subjects of a call from God, there is no apparent reason why we should not be allowed to beseech God that this call may become a blessing to them, that they may have grace to receive it in faith and be saved. Since such a prayer may be offered in the hope of its being heard, it can be offered in faith (Mark xi. 24 ; Jas. i. 5, 6), which is the condition necessary if the prayer is to be of any avail. It is a different matter when we consider the case of those who already have had their day of grace and misused it. For their salvation we have no ground for praying. Since such a prayer would overstep the conditions of salvation appointed by the Word of God, it would not be a prayer "according to God's will,"—a necessary condition if it is to be answered (1 John v. 14). And since the prayer has no support in the promises of God, it could not be offered in faith, and so would be fruitless. The only answer which the Lord would be able to give to such a prayer may be read in Jeremiah vii. 16 : "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee."

3. UNBAPTIZED CHILDREN AND SALVATION

This is a very difficult—indeed, we might also say, a hitherto unanswered—question. All salvation is connected with Christ. But we come into connection with Him only through the means of grace ; at all events, we do not know of any other way to Christ than this. Now, the means of grace are the Word and the sacraments. But the child is not susceptible to such means of grace as are afforded in the Word of God, which directs itself to the developed personal

life, and so we have only the sacraments left. Of these, baptism is the one which incorporates into fellowship with Christ, and thereby with the Triune God, into whose name the candidate is baptized (Matt. xxviii. 19). Now, if a child is not susceptible to the means of grace of the Word, and does not receive the opportunity of baptism, is there any means whereby it can come into connection with Christ, apart from whom there is no salvation? This is the knot which no one yet has been able to undo.

Even in the Early Church there was considerable difference of opinion on this point. On the one hand, men did not see in what way unbaptized children could possibly be saved; and, on the other hand, the most of them shrank from saying that such children were altogether lost. Consequently, they did not know what to do with them. Pelagius therefore doubtless expresses the view of more than himself when he says that he "knows whither they do not go (*i.e.* neither to heaven nor to hell), but not whither they do go." Against this, however, his great opponent Augustine objects that "there is no third place left." Undoubtedly the idea of such "a third place" had already asserted itself, but it had been rejected by the Synod of Carthage in the year 410. The Pelagians, according to Augustine's account, seem to have wished to consign dead unbaptized children to "a place of bliss outside of God's kingdom."¹ But of this he says with reason: "It is a thing hitherto unheard of in the Church, that there can be everlasting bliss outside of God's kingdom."² Consequently, since he does not see that they can be saved, he supposes that they are condemned, and he expresses this very strongly and unreservedly, even if on the other hand, he admits that such condemnation as these children have to face, apart from their own guilt, must be understood to be the mildest of all: "If little children are not baptized for the forgiveness of sins, they have not life in the kingdom of heaven."³ "If you will be called a believing Christian, then do not believe, and do not say that a child which dies unbaptized can obtain the forgiveness of original sin."⁴

¹ Aug., *De hæc.* c. 88.

² *Hypog.* i. 5.

³ *Sermo*, 294.

⁴ *De anima*, i.

"You may, no doubt with reason, say that the infants who die unbaptized will have the mildest condemnation of all; but those men who think that they will not be condemned, delude themselves and others."¹ "The one who is not for Christ is against Him, but children can only, by being baptized into Him, be reckoned in the number of those who are for Him. Again, he who does not believe in the Son is condemned already; but the child only at baptism becomes a believer."²

Since, at an earlier date, Augustine held milder views,³ and it is from him we have the golden maxim, that it is not the lack of the sacrament, but contempt for it, that condemns (*Contra Donat.* iv. 32), it must certainly have been the controversy with the Pelagians which led him so decidedly to demand baptism as the condition of salvation for the child, because by nature it was a "child of wrath," and as such had no share in the kingdom of God. Certain it is, however, that he maintained this position till his death; for in the critical retrospect of his writings (*Retractationes*), which he issued during his last years, he has nothing to withdraw of what he has said about the necessity of baptism, unless it be the admission that the malefactor on the cross was saved without baptism (since "the baptism of blood" took the place of the baptism of water), for he thinks that it is not by any means certain that the thief was not already baptized when he was crucified.⁴

His faithful disciple, and a trustworthy interpreter of his teaching, Fulgentius of Ruspe, speaks even more strongly: "Maintain, and never think of doubting, that children who, either in the mother's womb or after they are born, die without receiving the holy sacrament of baptism in the name of the Trinity, will be punished with a perpetual suffering of everlasting fire, since they, although in person they have not committed any sin, by reason of their carnal conception and birth have incurred condemnation."⁵

¹ *De pecc. merit.* i. 16.

² *Ibid.* i. 28.

³ *De lib. arbit.* iii. 23.

⁴ This reference to the penitent thief occurs in several of the ancient writers. In one place (*De anima*) Augustine conjectures that the malefactor was possibly baptized in death, since some of the blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of Jesus may have spurted over him.

⁵ *De fide ad Pet.* c. 27.

Outside of the Augustinian circle there was less austerity. Certainly Cyprian had already so expressed himself that it is quite manifest from his writings¹ that he did not entertain great hope of the salvation of these children. Jerome has not, so far as we know, expressed himself specially on the subject. He points out, however, that Cornelius received the Holy Ghost without baptism, and therefore gives us the idea that he was not so positive as the most of his contemporaries in making baptism an absolute condition of salvation. Ambrose modestly says that he does not know anything about what happens to unbaptized children.² In his commemorative oration over the unbaptized deceased Valentinian II. he consoles that emperor's bereaved Christian sisters with the hope that the wish of the deceased, to be baptized at the first opportunity, would have the same effect with God as baptism itself, an idea which the later scholasticism took up and employed in reference to all baptism.³

In the East we hear less of the question, because the doctrine of the deep depravity of human nature was not so prevalent there as in the West. Yet no doubt even there baptism was generally held to be an absolute condition of salvation. Thus Cyril of Jerusalem, in his *Katecheseis* (iii. 10), says, "excepting in the case of the martyrs, who without any water of baptism are admitted to the kingdom of God, no salvation is to be had apart from baptism; for when the Saviour, by His death on the cross, redeemed the world, both water and blood flowed from His wounded side, in order that some might be baptized with water in time of peace, others with their blood in times of persecution." To practically the same effect the other Greek Fathers also speak.⁴

In the Middle Ages the question was set at rest by the Church. We have already heard that what was lacking was "a third place," separate from heaven and hell, or, to speak more correctly, from bliss and perdition, to which could be relegated those children about whom distress was felt.

¹ *Epist. ad Fidum.*

² *De Abrah.* ii. 48.

³ *Cf. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Th.* iii. 68. 2.

⁴ See, *e.g.*, Basil the Great's treatise On the Holy Ghost.

Briefly, this is the whole story. When the idea of a "third place" was first proposed in the beginning of the fifth century it was rejected by the Church. But all the same, it gradually made way and gained the victory in the time and by the aid of Pope Gregory the Great; and eventually men not merely came to assume that there was an intermediate place, but even gave it three departments,—one for the believers of the Old Testament (*Limbus patrum*), one for the unbaptized children (*Limbus infantum*), and one for the believers who still required some purification (*Purgatorium*, *purgatory*).¹

So it has remained in the Roman Catholic Church till the present day. But different attempts have been made from time to time to explain why the children, from no fault of their own, fail to receive salvation. Some thought that such children would have gone to perdition even if they had been baptized, consequently there was no real harm done if they did not receive baptism. And then, there were controversies concerning the state of those in this suburb of hell to which they were consigned. The Catholic scholar Bellarmine sets forth no less than three different views on this point.

1. They are excluded both from the bliss of heaven and the torment of the lost, and feel neither pain nor joy (the general assumption).

2. They experience an inner pain through lack of bliss.

3. They experience both internal and external pain.

(4.) Some thought that unbaptized children go to heaven.

(5.) Others, like Pelagius, believed that they go to some place of bliss outside of heaven, yet without having any share in Christ and His salvation.²

Consequently, we have five different views on the same subject, and that in a Church which makes its constant boast that it always and everywhere teaches the same ("*semper eadem*"). It is not to be wondered at, then, that even the gentle Johan Gerhard ironically adds: "Here is an example of the renowned Catholic unity of doctrine!"

¹ See, on this subject, what has already been set forth on p. 158.

² Gathered from Joh. Gerhard's *Loci*, t. viii. 169, since we have not had access to Bellarmine's great work.

And in addition, there have been many variations of each of these views. Thus, *e.g.*, Bonaventura thinks that such children experience both joy at being free from the pains of the lost and grief at being excluded from heaven, and that these two emotions almost counterbalance each other; whilst this again is opposed by others. There have even been Catholics who ventured to hope that God might still give children salvation without baptism, "since He had not so connected His saving mercy with the sacraments that He could not, without violating His own law, in some inward way sanctify unbaptized children with the grace of baptism" (Joh. Gerson.). Even Cajetan, famous on account of his controversy with Luther, thought that in an extreme case the wish and promise of the parents to have the child baptized, accompanied by some external evidence of such a desire, might be sufficient.

Amongst Protestants, there is an essential difference between the views of the Reformed Church and the Lutherans on this subject. The former generally attribute to baptism so little importance that it is quite natural for them to take for granted that unbaptized children will be saved. But the subject assumes a much more doubtful position amongst Lutherans, by whom baptism is regarded as the entrance-door to the Church, at least for those who cannot use any other means.

This difference came to the front even in the case of the two leading Reformers. Calvin finds no difficulty at all in the matter, and feels so confident that such children will not go to perdition, that he even wishes to prove from this that the passage in John iii. 5 ("Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God") cannot treat of baptism;¹ and in the Reformed Church even till this day, no doubt whatever is entertained regarding their salvation. Luther, on the other hand, is very cautious. He has often referred to the subject.² Writing at a late date (1542), he dwells with most detail on the question in his

¹ *Inst.* IV. 16. 26.

² See Walch's Edition I., 1569, x. 868, xxi. 1443; *cf.* also, Hotting, *Das Sacram. d. Taufe*, i. pp. 132 *et seq.*

Epistle of Consolation to mothers whose children have been still-born, or have died without being baptized. When he, in that epistle, rejects Augustine's theory that such children undoubtedly go to perdition, he maintains, as Gerson previously had done, that "God has not so bound Himself to the means of grace that He could not possibly, in some way unknown to us, give them salvation without baptism." But God has refused to enlighten us on this point, in order that we might not neglect the usual means of grace which He has given us. We may place our confidence in the mercy of God towards such children, and therefore also—in contrast to the Romanists—give them a Christian burial. But any express Scripture warrant for the hope he cannot give.

The position taken up by Luther is that held by the Lutheran Church up to the present day. Certainly in its symbolical books our Church denounces as Anabaptist delusion the doctrine that "children who have not been baptized . . . in their innocence are saved without baptism," and that "the children of Christians, because they are born of Christian and believing parents, even without and before baptism, are holy and are the children of God" (*Konkordief., Grundrig Forkl.* XII. 6 and 8). But the context shows that this was only directed against those who denied the necessity for infant baptism. Our old dogmatists nearly all express a hope, more or less strong, for the salvation of unbaptized Christian children and try their best to give reasons for it. Even Joh. Gerhard, who in his *Loci* treats of the subject several times,¹ cannot produce any perfectly valid warrant for his hope. Besides recalling the old Augustinian maxim that it is not the want of, but contempt for, the sacrament that condemns, he refers to such passages as Genesis xvii. 7, Matthew xviii. 14, Mark x. 14, John vi. 37, which all together do not really contain any warrant. He next mentions the greatness of Christ's merits and the significance of the intercession of parents. Finally, he declares that even under the old covenant many children died without being circumcized (since circumcision—the prototype of

¹ First, under *Baptism* (t. iv. sec. 234), then under *Burial* (t. viii. sec. 138), and finally, under the *Future State* (t. viii. sec. 169).

baptism—according to God's decree, was not to be performed until the eighth day after birth), and did not on that account go to perdition; and that God Himself is not bound down to the means of grace He has prescribed, and therefore can save by other means unknown to us. The last is really the best and the only argument with which we can support our hope, and consequently the later dogmatists practically adopt it, and speak of "God's extraordinary grace," which may be expected to effect the forgiveness of sins even in the unbaptized child, and so save it. And we must also accept it. A Scripture warrant for this possibility we find in Luke i. 15 ("filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb"), which shows that the Holy Ghost can begin to work in a child's heart by means with which we are unacquainted. To this possibility we can connect a hope, but not more, since we do not know whether God will frequently repeat such a miracle. But we must certainly admit that the same possibility seems to apply to the case of the heathen (at least, of heathen children), who have no means of grace at all,—an analogy which our old dogmatists do not seem to have observed. Kliefoth, too, who strongly emphasizes this, places unbaptized children in exactly the same category as the heathen, and thinks that both go to the same temporary place (Hades), and, for the first time, at the Lord's return, will have the opportunity of laying hold of salvation, as has already been pointed out (p. 206). However, it cannot be denied that the Apostle Paul (in 1 Corinthians vii. 14, "but now are they holy"), actually seems to make a distinction between Christian and non-Christian children, apart from baptism. Certainly we cannot understand this obscure passage so that children, merely because they are the children of Christians, are cleansed from their sins, for then baptism would be quite superfluous. Even of them it holds true that they are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3), and that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and as such cannot, as a matter of course, enter into the kingdom of God (John iii. 3-6). Therefore the passage can only mean that the children of Christians, even from their birth, are, as it were, consecrated to God, although they are first at baptism

(or by an extraordinary act of grace exercised by God on behalf of such as die unbaptized) actually received into fellowship with Him. And in this sense the Lutheran Church has understood the passage.¹ The immediately preceding words (that the unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the one that believes, 1 Cor. vii. 14) show also clearly that here there is only mention of an external connection with the Church, but not of actually belonging to it in virtue of such an external relation alone. But, all the same, this passage indicates that the children of Christians stand in another and closer relation to salvation than the heathen.

The sum of the whole is that we may entertain a hope of salvation and bliss for our unbaptized children immediately after death, yet not more than a hope. But the question is still unanswered. Under any circumstances we have this consolation, that if the hope should be unfounded such children will at least have the opportunity of the uncalled at some time to receive God's gracious call.

¹ Cf. Höfling, *Das Sacrament der Taufe*, i. pp. 125, 126.

II

THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD UPON THE EARTH, UNTIL THE FINAL ADVENT OF THE LORD

WE have followed the dead into the dim regions beyond the grave, and, by means of the more or less clear beams of light thrown by the Word of God upon what there takes place, we have tried to form an idea of the condition of the soul in the future life, and of the possibility of changes which seem to open even in the interval between the death of the individual and the advent of Christ. We now return to the earth, in order to see what will happen here in the days that are to come.

Whilst those who are already dead live in bliss or misery their life beyond the grave, the Church continues its course upon the earth. What do we know about this future of the Church? What has it to experience before its career is ended and its history closed? That is a question which should be full of interest to us, even if we may not share in this future life of the Church upon the earth. For men of our race will they be who in those days suffer and fight on earth, and we therefore wish to know what will happen to them. There is, too, this connection between them and us, that we ourselves will not be perfected before the Church's earthly warfare and struggle are over and the resurrection morning dawns.

But is it not hazardous to ponder over and inquire into this future? The Word of God has certainly told us something concerning it, but something so obscure that scholars dispute regarding it, and many who have ventured upon this ground have

been led far astray. Have they not attempted to calculate the times and the seasons of the Lord's advent, and have not these calculations always failed? To some extent, too, they have created disturbance and done harm. Is it not the wisest course, then, to avoid entering upon the discussion of these questions about the unknown future?

To this it may be answered, that it all depends on the aim of our inquiries into the future. Inquiry may concern the following three questions:—

1. What great events can we suppose will take place in the kingdom of God from the present day until the judgment?

2. In what order will they take place?

3. At what intervals will these events take place, and how long will each of them last,—in other words, when is the end to be expected?

About the first of these we receive considerable information in Scripture. The second is much more difficult. At the third we come to a complete standstill. And the great misfortune is that there has been too much thoughtless venturing upon this last domain. For our part, we mean to keep it outside of our investigation altogether; for it is beyond us. The mouth of truth has said that none but the Father knoweth when the coming of the Lord shall be (Mark xiii. 32); and so it is fruitless, indeed contrary to Scripture, to enter into calculations as to when the Messiah will come again. It is to wish to be wise beyond—indeed, really against—what is written. And if we cannot calculate when the close of history is to be, we need not try to estimate the duration of the different sections of time within this future history. In the one respect, as in the other, we must be satisfied with the Lord's words: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts i. 7).

It has also been manifest that all attempts to determine times and seasons, either for the separate sections or for the close of the development, have led only to disappointment and confusion. Even in the earliest period of the Church the thought strongly asserted itself, that the day of the Lord

was near at hand, a view against which the Apostle Paul himself had to utter distinct warnings (2 Thess. ii. 1 *et seq.*).¹ But in spite of these warnings, during the time of the persecutions, the idea of the Lord's speedy return to set free His saints and judge their persecutors soon again became general. It assumed a more definite form among the Montanists (in the second and third centuries), who, with great assurance, maintained that the Lord's personal return was very nigh, and who even ventured to fix the place where He was to be manifested (the town of Pepuza in Phrygia). But the course of events put this prophecy, like so many that succeeded it, to shame. That, however, did not deter them from making new attempts at prophecy. Thus the years 365, 500, 1000,—especially the last,—and 1350 were indicated as the date for the Lord's advent. And towards the close of the twelfth century Joachim of Floris preached that "the age of the Spirit was at hand." Most frequently however, in the Middle Ages, these prophecies were less founded on interpretation of Scripture than occasioned by great tribulations and alarming events. The ravages of the Huns, the conflict of the Mohammedans with Christendom, the Crusades, the Black Death, were phenomena which, each by itself, originated the view in many minds that the end of all things was now very near.

Among Protestants, essays in the art of calculating the time of the Lord's advent have also been made, and the calculations have been chiefly based on the figures, as supposed data, in the Books of Daniel and the Revelation, but always with unsatisfactory results. Jurieu fixed the Lord's advent for 1785, Bengel for 1836, Jung Stilling for 1816, Sander for 1847, etc. Even the Syrian Christians

¹ Many commentators have undoubtedly thought that Paul himself expected the Lord's advent very soon, and they especially quote Philippians iv. 5, "The Lord is at hand" (*e.g.*, Meyer and many others), and they have in support hereof pointed to passages like James v. 9 and 1 Peter iv. 7. However, there is scarcely any doubt that those expositors are right who, in the passage quoted, see only an expression implying that the Lord is always near to His own (so Calvin, and, in recent times, Gerlach, Braune, Hofmann, and others). In the consciousness of the Lord's constant presence Christians ought to walk circumspectly and suffer patiently (*cf.* the Lord's promise: "Lo, I am with you alway," Matt. xxviii. 20).

in India have thought they might clear up the matter; for when a revival passed over the district of Travancore in Southern India in 1874-75 there arose a sect which got the name of the Six-year sect, because it definitely expected and preached the advent of the Lord in six years from 1875, and even ventured to fix the day (2nd October 1881).¹ The Irvingites at first were quite confident that they would all live to see the advent of the Lord, but that hope has not been fulfilled. The Adventists expected it in 1847, then in 1873, and when that proved wrong they were apparently so certain that the advent would take place on 19th April 1875 that they even, in expectation thereof, parted with nearly all that they possessed, and thereby were reduced to great straits. Now, the well-known calculator, Baxter, has come to the conclusion that Christ will descend on the Mount of Olives on the 11th of April 1901, in order to destroy Antichrist and establish the millennial kingdom. However, the appearance of Antichrist was to be prepared for by terrific wars which were to begin in 1888-91, but we have seen none of them yet. In short, all calculations prove to be mere self-deception. That is quite natural, too, when we notice on what a feeble basis they rest. The obscure passage about the week-years in Daniel ix. 24-27, and "the number of the beast" (Antichrist) in Revelation xiii. 18, are the most important data for the calculation. And where this does not apply, imagination is allowed to fill up what is lacking, and then we are supplied with an interpretation of Scripture which we have no need to criticize, because it is so far beneath all criticism.² And so these calculations have met with well-deserved discredit from all true investigators.

¹ An interesting article on this sect will be found in the *Evangelical Missionary Magazine* for 1877, pp. 77 *et seq.*

² Some English interpreters can hardly be argued with. Baxter, *e.g.*, builds his theory about the seven days on passages like Leviticus xxvi. 28, Daniel iv. 16; and men like Grattan Guinness, and many others, seem to agree with him on the point. Anyone can surely see that these passages have nothing in the least to do with the question. In the first passage, there is only reference to a sevenfold punishment (for on the ambiguity that "seven times" may mean either seven periods or sevenfold, Baxter has erected his whole fabric), and in the second, to the seven years during which Nebuchadnezzar was to be insane.

In the pages that follow, therefore, we purpose not to enter upon any calculation of times and seasons, but to leave the matter to the Father, who has kept it "in His own power." We only mean to attempt to solve a much more modest problem, to discover what, according to Scripture, is to take place in God's kingdom until the Lord's final advent, and likewise to arrive at some understanding as to the order in which events are to happen. Even this is a task which we feel to be so great that we cannot fully discharge it; why then should we launch on the far more difficult—yea impossible—calculation of the time, for which we are quite convinced the necessary material is not to be found in Scripture?

With this plan before us, then, we shall attempt to give a connected idea of the future, according to the Revelation of John, and thereafter dwell a little on the main features of the development which either prepares for the time of the end (the conversion of the Gentiles and the Jews) or belongs to it (the time of Antichrist and the millennial kingdom, with what pertains to it, as conditions of or results from these main incidents).

A.—THE REVELATION

As we now turn to the most obscure of all the books of the Bible, we desire it to be clearly understood that it is not our purpose to attempt to give an exposition of the Revelation, a task we have neither time nor space for, even if we had the courage to face it. We merely intend to supply a brief introduction to it, make an effort to determine its character, and point out its fundamental thoughts. Those who desire to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with every detail we must refer to other works.¹

The Book of Revelation has a character all its own. It

¹ For laymen we know no better book than Burger's. Bishop Laache's little book on the Revelation is capital, but brief. Wettergreen's may be read for edification, but is valueless for exposition. Theologians naturally will prefer scholarly works such as Christiani's, Auberlen's, Hengstenberg's, Kliefoth's, and Madsen's, to all of which we are greatly indebted for good guidance. This is especially true of Professor Madsen's excellent work.

is indeed in this respect very distinct from all the rest of the New Testament.

In the first place, it is the only prophetic book in the new covenant. It reminds us strongly of the Old Testament, in which the prophetic element is so very prominent because salvation still belonged to the future. It is the new covenant's book of the future, as the books of the prophets were of the old. The prophets were specially directed to the coming Christ; the Revelation is directed to the returning Christ. In the prophets under the old covenant, His first coming in the flesh and His second coming in glory ran together into one picture. (*Cf., e.g.,* passages like Joel iii. 1-3.) To the author of the Revelation His first coming is already a completed fact, and he therefore pays attention exclusively to the second; but otherwise there is this similarity to the prophets, that here, as in them, the coming of Christ is the great object in view; and in the light of that, and as a preparation for it, we must look at everything else in the future with which the Revelation is occupied.

And then, in the next place, the Revelation distinctly resembles the Old Testament in its language and method of representing the truth, in its wealth of imagery and in its symbolism; and great portions of the book evidently refer back to the prophets of the old covenant, especially to Daniel and occasionally Ezekiel, sometimes also to others, and must be compared with these if it is to be thoroughly understood (*cf.* Rev. xiii. 1 *et seq.* with Dan. vii. 6 *et seq.*; Rev. xxii. 2 with Ezek. xlvii. 1, 2; Rev. iv. 8 with Isa. vi. 3, etc.).

And it also resembles the Old Testament in this, that it makes a very extensive use of symbolical numbers. The "sacred number" plays an important part in it, as we mean to show by some examples.

The number 3 as an expression for the Triune God appears frequently. It is this thought which is the reason why He is designated as the One "which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. iv. 8), an idea which so dominates the author's mind that, in order to express it, he even transgresses the laws of language (*cf.* the passage in the original). As the

Triune, He is praised with a triple "holy" (iv. 8; *cf.* Isa. vi. 3). The hosts of heaven praise Him with a triple doxology (glory, honour, power, iv. 11), and there proceed from Him three expressions of power (lightnings, thunders, and voices, iv. 5), and a triple woe (viii. 13).

The number 4 is the number of creation [4 seasons—(summer, winter, seed-time, and harvest); 4 periods of the day (day and night, morning and evening); 4 quarters of the heaven (south and north, east and west); and there were 4 elements in the days of old (earth, water, fire, and air)]. The book also speaks of 4 living beings or creatures, which represent creation before the face of God (iv. 6). Creation itself is summed up with 4 terms: heaven, earth, sea, rivers (viii. 7–12, xvi. 2–9). And when there is mention of creation as such—apart from God's covenant relation to it—the number 4 again finds application. There is reference to the 4 corners of the earth and the 4 winds (vii. 1); and the inhabitants of the earth are designated by a fourfold term (nations, kindreds, peoples, tongues, v. 9, vii. 9, xiv. 6, etc.). Even the instruments of God's judgment on the earth are looked at from the same point of view; for there are 4 angels of punishment (vii. 1, ix. 14), 4 riders on horses who proceed from the Lord to bring great misfortunes upon the earth (vi. 2–8); and God's interference in creation through the forces of nature is indicated by a fourfold expression (lightnings, thunders, voices, earthquakes, xvi. 18).

The number 7 is the sum of the numbers of God and creation (iii. 4), and so expresses, as is well known, the covenant relation between both. As such it already appears in the first book of the Bible (Gen. ii. 2, xxi. 28), and that significance it retains even in the last book, which is now specially occupying our attention. It is therefore employed where God appears as the God of salvation, as the One who has entered into covenant relation with His Church. Consequently, we must at the outset expect to find it very frequently in a book like the Revelation, which is mainly intended to show us how God's Church, during the tribulations of time, will suffer and struggle, fight and conquer. And this turns out to be the case; for there is no number so frequent

in the Book of Revelation as the number 7. The Lord reveals Himself as the one walking in the midst of the 7 candlesticks, holding 7 stars in His right hand (i. 13–16), dictating 7 epistles (ii. and iii.) to the 7 churches and their 7 angels or overseers, which are symbolically designated by these candlesticks and stars (i. 20). Moreover, there is mention of 7 seals (v. 1), 7 angels with 7 trumpets (viii. 2), 7 golden vials full of the wrath of God, borne by 7 angels (xv. 1–7), 7 thunders (x. 3), 7 lamps burning before the throne of God (iv. 5). The Lamb had 7 horns and 7 eyes, which indicate the 7 spirits of God (v. 6). And the very doxology itself has 7 items (“power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing”) when it refers to the covenant victim, the Lamb of God slain (v. 12), or to God as the God of the covenant and of salvation (vii. 12).

When the antichristian forces seek to play God’s rôle, and enter into a kind of covenant relation with men,—a caricature of God’s covenant,—these too appear under the banner of number 7. The dragon has 7 heads, and on his heads 7 crowns (xii. 3). The beast that rose up out of the sea has 7 heads (xiii. 1; xvii. 3). It wishes to be an imitation of the Lamb, but it becomes something monstrous; for 7 eyes and 7 horns, as the Lamb had, have a sensible meaning (sevenfold wisdom and power), but 7 heads imply something divided, and contrary to nature.

Even the age and the kingdom of Antichrist appear for the same reason under the symbolism of the number 7, for it embraces a week of years (7 years), divided into two parts, of which each comprises $3\frac{1}{2}$ years (= 42 months or 1260 days). The former is the preparation, the time of the two witnesses (xi. 2, 3); the latter is the duration of Antichrist’s real supremacy, the time of the beast (xiii. 5); consequently, in all, 7 years. And the capital of Antichrist’s kingdom (Babylon) is built on 7 hills (xvii. 9).

The number 12 is the product of 3 and 4 (3×4), and designates the Church, which is the result of God’s dealings with humanity. And we read in Revelation of the 12 tribes of Israel, answering to the 12 patriarchs, as the representatives of the Old Testament Church. And since

the New Testament has 12 similar representatives in the 12 Apostles (Rev. xxi. 14), the number becomes 2×12 , *i.e.* the 24 elders who stand before the throne of God in heaven (Rev. iv. 4, xi. 16). Those sealed from each of the 12 tribes of Israel are 12×1000 (vii. 4). The New Jerusalem (the dwelling of the Church triumphant) has a length, breadth, and height of 12,000 furlongs (xxi. 16); the walls of the city have 12 foundations (xxi. 14), 12×12 cubits high (xxi. 17), have 12 gates of 12 pearls (xxi. 21), and 12 kinds of precious stones adorn its foundations (xxi. 19, 20).

The number 10 is, as is well known, the perfect number, and so the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle was 10 cubits in every direction; and the main injunctions of the law were 10 ("the ten commandments"). In this significance, too, it appears in the Revelation, sometimes alone, sometimes multiplied into itself. The Church in Smyrna was to have tribulation for 10 days, *i.e.* a full measure of tribulation (Rev. ii. 10). The millennial kingdom (xx. 2) is to last for $10 \times 10 \times 10$ years. The heavenly hosts of God are $10,000 \times 10,000$ and 1000×1000 (v. 11). The beast (Antichrist) which is to play the part of perfect, since it will make itself God, has 10 horns with 10 crowns (xiii. 1). The swarming hosts of the abyss are $2 \times 10,000 \times 10,000$ (ix. 16),—also an imitation of the hosts of God which is quite remarkable. The angel of the abyss, who is their prince (ix. 11), will do even better than God by doubling the number which indicates the armies of the Almighty. But in that way he introduces the number 2, the number of division [*cf.* doubt from *dubium* (*duo*, two), and many similar words in English and other languages], and therefore condemns himself and his host to self-destruction.

The number 6 is not a sacred number, and plays no part in the symbolism of the Bible. But in the Revelation we meet it in the combination 666, which is the number of the beast (xiii. 18).¹ What meaning has it here? It has generally been supposed that this number is meant to indicate the name of the beast (*i.e.* Antichrist), or, at any rate, a word which will be a characteristic expression

¹ Regarding the textual controversy about this number, the reader is referred to the critical edition of Westcott and Hort, Appendix, p. 139.

for its nature. Some have started from the undoubted fact that both among the Jews and Greeks the letters had a numerical value (for the designation of numbers by figures had not yet originated), so that *a* meant 1, *b* 2. It was necessary, therefore, they thought, to find a word in which all the letters in combination had the value of 666. This word must then either be the personal name of Antichrist himself, or at least a characteristic designation of him. They imagined that they were quite warranted in coming to this conclusion because among the Jews it was a universal custom to turn words into numerical values, and the converse.¹ In this way, of course, there was opened a wide field for arbitrary speculation, since there was a multitude of words in one language or another which could be employed, especially as the calculations were made partly according to the numerical values of the letters of the Greek, and partly of the Hebrew alphabet. But just because these calculations to explain the name are so arbitrary, they are also absolutely valueless.²

¹ In connection with this method of interpretation, which passed under the name of *Gematria*, reference may be made to Dr. Ginsburg's *The Kabbalah*, p. 49, and his commentary on Ecclesiastes, pp. 31, 32. Cf. also Glassius, *Phil. Sac.* pp. 427-32, and A. Pfeiffer, *Critica Sacra*, vii. sec. 6.

² Of the many explanations based on this theory, the oldest is perhaps the one which brings out the word *Lateinos* (i.e. the Latin), which would therefore mean that Antichrist is to spring from the empire of Rome (so, e.g., Irenæus and Hippolytus). Of other constructions may be mentioned: Qesar Neron (the Emperor Nero), Qesar Rom (the emperor of Rome), Romjith (the Roman, i.e. Empire), Genseric, Diocletian, Muhamed (Maometis), Napoleon (Napolionte), in which some find a play upon Apollyon (ix. 11). Hengstenberg thinks that he has found the name in Adonikam in Ezra ii. 13, because that name appears there in connection with the number 666. Besides, a long list of Greek words has been given as indicating the being of Antichrist, because the total numerical value of the word happens to be 666, such as Titan (the heaven stormer), Antemos (the dishonourable?), Lampetes (the lying), Antidikos (the adversary). A Catholic conjectures Lauter (Luther), just as, on the other hand, Protestants have often referred *Lateinos* to the pope. A recent American author, cited by Madsen, who rightly laughs at all this absurdity, jocularly proposed Parnell; for when one writes that name in Greek (Parnellos) he gets the number 666. (Vide Professor Madsen's *Revelation of John*, pp. 178 *et seq.*, 218 *et seq.*, 570-83; Hengstenberg's *Revelation of John*, ii. 60 *et seq.*; Kliefoth's *Revelation of John*, i. 84 *et seq.*, and *Eschatologie*, pp. 25 *et seq.*)

It must be noted that the great majority of English authors adopt *Lateinos*, and thereby understand the Roman Catholic Church with its papal authority. So Elliot long ago understood it in his famous work, *Horæ Apocalypticæ* (vol.

Certainly it cannot be denied that this search for a word, the letters of which express the number, may seem to have some support from the wording of the passage, since there is mention not only of "the number of the beast," but also of the "number of its name," and that as the subject of calculation (Rev. xiii. 17, 18). We are thereby undeniably, apparently, led to the natural conclusion that the number is expressed in the name, and that therefore the number might enable us to discover the name. However, since in Scripture the name is an expression for the nature, the "number of the name" will scarcely tell us anything other or more than the "number of the beast."

It is even more unnatural to seek in this number for any chronological guidance, (*i.e.* that 666 years is the period during which the beast will reign¹), for there is nothing in the text to hint that there is any mention here of duration of time.

Since, as has been pointed out, there is reference to the

iv.), in which the whole Revelation is set forth as a prophetic history of the Church and the world; and the older English expositors have almost invariably followed him. Dr. Cumming (*Apocal. Sketches*, p. 225) gives the reason for this application to the Roman Catholic Church's papal authority in the following words: "His (the pope's) prayers are in Latin; the ecclesiastical decisions, decrees of the councils, and bulls, are in Latin. The service-book, ritual, etc., are in Latin. He blesses and bans in Latin. Everything is in Latin." (A poor enough kind of reasoning.)

Similarly, Alford, Blackley, Fausset, and many others. Professor Uriah Smith, who, in his *Meditations on the Revelation*, also considers the number to be an expression for the name of the papacy, finds in 666 the numerical value of the pope's title, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, as German scholars earlier had done.

A peculiar view was set forth by Hugo Grotius, who thinks that the passage aims at the Emperor Trajan, in whose day a grievous persecution of the Christians broke out. Trajan's first name was Ulpius, and when that is written in Greek letters we get exactly the numerical value 666. (*Annot. in N. T.*, ii. pp. 1223-1225.)

But both his "historical" view of the book (that everything refers to almost contemporary events) and his consequent ideas of Antichrist are altogether erroneous, as we shall later endeavour to show. That he, however, in spite of this, can light upon a name the numerical value of which fits in, merely shows how arbitrary all this *Gematria* is.

¹ So, for example, Bengel (both in his exposition of Revelation and in his "Indago Apocalyptica" in *Ordo Temporum*, pp. 210 *et seq.*), who in these 666 years finds a reference to the duration of the Hildebrandian papacy. Similarly, several others both before and after him.

"number of the name" and to calculating it, we certainly dare not deny the possibility that in the proper name of Antichrist there may lie something which specially recalls that number; but it is at least so obscure that it cannot be determined before his appearance and conduct show that he is the man. Then possibly his very name will throw some light upon the "number of his name." But, at the outset, to make up his name according to the number is of no avail, and can, as we have already said, only lead to absolute arbitrariness, since there is in reality no end to the names, letters of which in combination make up that number either according to the Greek or Hebrew numerical value, especially when one takes a little liberty with the orthography, and now adds, and now removes, the first name and the title.¹

Now, whatever may be the precisely literal relation of this name to the number, it is at least indubitable that the number 666 has not been selected quite arbitrarily, so that the figure might, without any change of thought at all, just as well have been 1000. The Revelation, almost universally, as we have seen, employs numbers which have a symbolic significance, and there can be no doubt that the same is the case with this number,—in other words, that in some way it does point to the nature and person of Antichrist. What significance has it then in this respect?

The number 6, it has been noted, is not a symbolical number in Scripture.² In the Revelation, apart from the passage in question, it appears nowhere except in iv. 8, where it manifestly depends on Isaiah vi. 2. Its significance must therefore be sought, not in what it itself expresses, but in its relation to one of the sacred numbers, the symbolical

¹ Besides, it is undoubted that it would be quite contrary to the usage of the Greek language to designate a number with several letters, which together had its value, without reference to what the letters were. On the contrary, the custom was to adopt one letter for units, one for tens, and one for hundreds, etc. Of course, in this case we should only have the three letters (χ , ξ , ϵ), and from these it is not very easy to compound a name (*vide* Kühner's *Ausführliche Gram. d. gr. Sprache*, i. p. 480, and Donaldson's *Complete Greek Grammar*, pp. 140 *et seq.*).

² Reference has certainly been made to the six working days of the week, and some would like to make 6 the number of practical activity, but there is no further employment of 6 as a symbolical number in Scripture.

meaning of which is unambiguous. This has been attempted in two different ways, either by looking at it in relation to 12, the number of the Church (as Bishop Wordsworth does), or by placing it in connection with the number 7 as the number of the covenant (the usual way). In the former case it would then indicate that the Church of Antichrist will only be half or incomplete in comparison with God's; in the second, that Antichrist will probably aim at establishing a covenant relation, but will not accomplish it, will not reach the number 7, however much he multiplies the number 6 [$6 + (6 \times 10) + (6 \times 10 \times 10)$].

But against the first interpretation it may be argued that here there is no reference whatever to the Church of Antichrist, but only to Antichrist himself; and against the second, it may with reason be objected that Antichrist already possesses his covenant mark both in the 7 heads of the dragon and of the first beast (xii. 3, xiii. 1), a mark, however, which, as has already been indicated, is only a caricature of the Lamb. We must therefore look about us for another number to which it can be placed in relation, and we find that the number 3 naturally presents itself. The antichristian forces wish to set themselves up in the place of the Triune God, an attempt which fails since it is divided into a double Trinity, a Trinity with the discordant and destructive elements of dualism in itself. During the attempt to make it still better than the Triune God the number 2 (the number of partition and division) slips in (2×3 is 6), and it does not matter how often one multiplies the number 6 that has been produced—it will always be a divided and therefore unfortunate Trinity. The number 3 cannot be arrived at in that way.¹

This view gains in strength from the fact that it really appears from chapter xii. *et seq.* that the antichristian powers attempt to figure as a Trinity. First comes the dragon and summons the beast (a mockery of the Father who begets the Son); then we have in this beast a caricature of the Lamb

¹ Cf. what has been already said about the host of the power of darkness, the number of which stands in exactly the same relation to the number of God's host as the number 6 to the number 3.

(the Son); and finally comes the false prophet (xvi. 13), who, according to his name, must have as his work the duty of explaining the beast to the people, as the Holy Ghost does with reference to the Son (John xiv. 26). But that is not all. The conception of the beast resolves itself into a triad: the first beast (xiii. 1), the second beast (xiii. 11), and the image of the beast (xiii. 14, 15). Here then we have this double Trinity—the caricature of the Trinity—whose sign is the number 6, a number which it cannot escape, however often it doubles it (666).

Here we must leave the number-symbolism of the book.¹ The reason why we have dwelt somewhat particularly on this is to show to how great an extent this book has been permeated by such a symbolism, and how unwarranted therefore it is to attempt to take every separate saying in the same literal sense as in an ordinary prose treatise.

In order that we may properly understand the Book of Revelation it is necessary to notice that its manner of looking at things is characteristic. With all prophetic books it has at least this in common, that it sees the future “in perspective,” *i.e.* what lies nearest to its own point of view is seen most distinctly, whilst the more distant not only becomes more obscure, but the different objects and events draw nearer together, so that the distance between them disappears, or, at any rate, is greatly diminished. It is with this view as when we place ourselves between the two rows of trees at one end of a long avenue. Whilst we can easily see the spaces between the trees nearest to us, these spaces diminish more and more to the eye the more distant they are, and away at the other end we only see one tree running into another without any apparent interval, whilst at the same time the two rows draw nearer each other, so that the avenue

¹ Since this whole symbolism of numbers rests on the already established use of these numbers in the Old Testament, it will not be quite clear without further reference to the Old Testament view, which considerations of space forbid. Those who wish for more information are referred to the article “Zahlen” in Winer and Herzog, and especially Rihm (*Handwörterbuch*, pp. 1775–1785). Reference may be made to the relative articles in the best English biblical encyclopædias. There is an exhaustive discussion of the symbolism of numbers in Bähr (*Symbol. d. mosaischen Cultus*).

seems much narrower at the farther end than at the point where we are standing. But, so far as the Book of Revelation is concerned, there must be taken into consideration still another fact, which is also connected with the special character of the prophetic view. When one looks away over a landscape he sees plainly enough what lies nearest to him; and he can generally see more or less distinctly the highest mountain tops, especially if he happens to have a good telescope to curtail the distances. The intermediate valleys and plains, however, become more indistinct and glide more and more into each other. Such is exactly the case in the Book of Revelation. Whilst the nearer landscape (the contents of the Book of the Present, chaps. ii. and iii.), as it were, naturally appears very distinctly, the more distant (the peaks away at the horizon, the great events at the end of time, chaps. xi.—xxii.) are seen comparatively clearly when the telescope of the prophetic vision is directed towards it. On the other hand, the intervening parts, from the days of the prophet to the beginning of the Antichristian Age's great week of years (therefore chaps. iv.—x.), are generally very obscure. Here we can in great measure only see—mainly arrayed in symbolic dress—a representation in rough outline of the violent convulsions through which the kingdom of God must make its way to the time of the end, which is the great and real goal of the book. Of the Book of Revelation, that certainly holds true which was said of a section of a kindred book in the Old Testament: "The vision belongeth to the time of the end" (Dan. viii. 17 R.V.).

It is so much the more necessary to observe and maintain this, as our warrant for interpreting the first portion of the book and the last more literally than the intermediate part, and for seeing definite events in it, is based on the peculiarity of the prophetic view and method of representation which have been indicated.

After these introductory remarks we now pass on to consider the plan and contents of the book, and we purpose taking the opportunity of still further showing that what has been indicated is warranted.

Although the Book of Revelation is in many respects obscure, yet there is a strange clearness and definiteness in its composition, in its inner line of thought.

After an introduction (i. 11–19) in which the Lord manifests Himself to John, commanding him to write down what is about to be shown to him, there follows the real book (i. 20–xxii. 5), which contains an exhortation to pay careful attention to the contents, and a longing that the end which the book aims at (the coming of the Lord) may soon arrive; and the whole is closed with a supplementary section (xxii. 6–21).

The real book falls into two distinctly separate parts: a Book of the Present, which treats of contemporary matters; and a Book of the Future, which deals with events that prepare for or belong to the time of the end. This division is due to the Lord Himself, who at the close of the introductory vision (i. 19) gives John the following command: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are" (the Book of the Present), "and the things which shall be hereafter" (the Book of the Future).

The Book of the Present (chaps. ii. and iii.) contains 7 epistles to the 7 churches in Asia Minor in the time of the Apostle John. It has only to do with the future in so far as the states of these churches were prototypes of the conditions of the various churches which should exist in the visible Church on earth until the end of days. We here meet churches which are unblamable but weak (Philadelphia), or in distress (Smyrna); others which are strong but with waning love (Ephesus); others, again, which are quite vigorous on the whole but lacking in some details of doctrine or life (Pergamos and Thyatira); then a lukewarm one (Laodicea); and finally, one which is quite dead (Sardis). In these five classes we have a good representation of the state of the churches throughout all time. It will scarcely be possible to point out any church in any age which does not fall under one or other of these categories. And so far there lies an indirect prophecy in these epistles. It is also significant, that there were only 7 churches to be written to. This is not because at that time there were no other

churches in Asia Minor, for some of the largest (*e.g.*, the one at Colosse, with which we are made acquainted in the Epistle of Paul) are quite passed by. We must therefore conclude that it is for some special reason that the apostle is to write only to 7 churches, and that the special churches just mentioned are chosen to the exclusion of others, some of which are even better known. They are 7, because it is the churches of the new covenant that are to be characterized (7 is the covenant number), and only these 7 are chosen because their condition is such that they are best fitted to be types of the states of churches as a rule in the future,—not as they ought to be, but as they actually will be during the earthly career of the Church. Possibly that is not the explanation. At any rate, we have suggested the idea as worthy of consideration.

We certainly believe that those writers are going too far who in these 7 churches see a prediction of the 7 periods of development in the history of the Church,¹ or of the position in the Christian Church of the different nations.² The Book of the Present thus becomes a Book of the Future, which conflicts with the whole plan and purpose of the Revelation. In this way there crops up an infinity of arbitrary opinions, and there will then be no end to the mutual disagreements between the expositors who set out upon this road. However, we cannot trouble ourselves further with this, since, as a matter of fact, we have here only to treat of the Revelation, so far as it is the Book of the Future, therefore mainly with that part of it which undoubtedly refers to the future. The Book of the Present concerns us only so far as we must define and characterize it before we proceed to the Book of the Future, in order that the difference between them may appear all the more clearly.

As we leave this section we wish only to remark further, that the state out of which even the Book of the Present has issued is certainly a state of ecstasy (i. 10); but the stand-

¹ So, *e.g.*, the majority of the expositors of the Revelation, who write from the church-history point of view.

² So, *e.g.*, Grundtvig in his famous poem, *Kristenhedens Syestjerne* (Germans are Sardis; Scandinavians, Philadelphia, etc.).

point is still the earth, not heaven, as in the Book of the Future (iv. 1). In this the two books distinctly differ from each other.

We now turn to the Book of the Future (iv. 1–xxii. 5). Before we begin to consider closely the contents of the book, we must premise a few words about the plan of it.

Is the Revelation arranged chronologically? Is it, in other words, so arranged that the predictions which come first in the book will be fulfilled first, and those which come last will be fulfilled last, and all the intermediate events will be fulfilled in the order in which they appear in the book? That is, as is well known, a very old controversial question between the interpreters of the book.

In our opinion, it can be answered both with Yes and No. And we shall attempt here to establish this Yes and No somewhat more definitely.

This Book of the Future is certainly chronological, but only within the different prediction-cycles of which it is composed. For it consists of several such, each going right to the end, but not stretching equally far back. The history of the kingdom of God up to the very end is first drawn with great strokes under the figure of a book—the Book of the Future—the seals of which are broken the one after the other. At the opening of the seventh seal (viii. 1) we already stand at the end, and the first cycle is closed. But the time of the end itself has a wealth of incidents, and these are now unfolded to our gaze under the figure of the 7 trumpets at the opening of the seventh seal. When the seventh trumpet sounds (xi. 15) we stand again at the end,—the second cycle is completed, the age of Antichrist begins. But even this ending-time in a more special sense has its extension. There is, for instance, a judgment to be passed upon the kingdom of Antichrist before the Lord comes again personally to destroy Antichrist himself; and this judgment is now represented to us under the figure of 7 vials of wrath which are connected with the seventh trumpet. Only when the seventh vial of wrath has been poured out and has done its work (xvi. 17–xix. 10) does Christ come (xix. 11 *et seq.*), strike down all opposition, bind

the dragon, summon the first resurrection, and establish the millennial kingdom, which is closed with a last conflict; and then follow His last coming, the general resurrection, the judgment, eternal punishment and everlasting life. All this from xix. 11 onward is manifestly chronological, and is connected with the seventh vial of wrath. There are therefore three great cycles of prophecy, the 7 seals, the 7 trumpets, the 7 vials of wrath. Of these three, which individually go right to the end, each in succession takes up the last link in the preceding and unfolds it, develops it more fully, and it is only when we come to the end of the last of them that we reach the final close of the whole.

We may also observe that there is a short interval between the sixth and seventh seal (vii.), and between the sixth and seventh trumpet (x. 1—xi. 14). These are, as it were, interludes between the great main acts in the drama of the future.

We may perhaps make this kind of chronological method of representation more plain by an analogy. Let us imagine that some one is giving a lecture on church history. He is specially interested in modern times (the time of the end). His chief desire is to represent that age clearly to us. But, in order to do this, he must also briefly treat of the history that preceded, in which the present has its root. After having referred in some detail to the Apostolic Age (corresponding to the Book of the Present in Revelation) as typical of all that follows, he hurries somewhat lightly over the early centuries and the Middle Ages, and then comes to modern times (the first cycle corresponding to the 7 seals). After this general survey he begins a special and exhaustive discussion of modern times (the seventh seal), and resolves it into its different periods (the 7 trumpets), the events of which he then unfolds to our gaze. But he is not done yet. He finds that the last period (the seventh trumpet), *e.g.*, the last hundred years, is so peculiarly important for his purpose that he must make it the subject of a still more exhaustive and special treatment, and so he again divides this into smaller sections (the 7 vials of wrath) and discusses each of them separately. Only at the last of these (the seventh vial) does he come for the third and last time to the end, and therewith conclude

the whole. Here we have a figure of the plan of the Revelation, and we can thus form an idea of the sense in which it is chronological and in which it is not. Of course, we have regarded this example only as a figure of the form of the representation, not as a perfect analogy. It is, for example, not by any means our opinion that we are to-day in the time of the seventh vial, as the following pages will doubtless show clearly enough.¹

We now pass on to indicate further the contents of the Book of the Future.

Chapter iv.,—and in a certain sense chapter v.,—forms an introduction. The holy seer is suddenly removed from the earth and lifted up to heaven, in order, from that exalted station, to observe what is to happen upon the earth in obedience to the commands from heaven. The stage in heaven from which the government of the whole world proceeds is first described. The Lord sits on His regal throne in indescribable splendour. Before Him burn the 7 (the covenant number) lamps. Round Him stand the 24 elders,—typifying the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles, who represent respectively the churches of the old and the new covenant, the one true kingdom of God,—and round the throne the 4 living beings (“the 4 beasts”), which represent the whole creation. They have the form of the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle, to designate courage, strength, wisdom, and celerity as the greatest of the forces working in creation; and they have many wings and many eyes, to indicate that the omniscience of God embraces the whole creation, and that His forces give it wings and sustain it. The 4 living beings and the 24 elders magnify God, and lay all their glory at His feet; for both the Church and the whole creation are made for the honour and praise of God. Here anew David’s 148th Psalm is sung more gloriously than ever, “Praise ye the Lord.”

In chapter v. the knot is tied by the Father and loosed by the Son. In His right hand the Father holds the closed

¹ It is not possible, of course, in this survey of the plan of the book, to refer to divergent opinions. For these the reader is referred to the commentaries, and especially to Professor Madsen’s excellent exposition of the book.

Book of the Future, furnished with 7 seals. Then the question is asked: Who is able to break these seals so that the book may be opened, and the events of the future in God's kingdom may be unfolded. There is no one worthy to do this except the Lion of Judah, who is likewise the Lamb of God that was slain. The reason for this is readily understood. The history which the book contains is the history of the kingdom of God in the New Testament era. But the Alpha and Omega of this history, its beginning and its end, is Christ. He is the axis round which the history of the kingdom of God revolves. Apart from Him there would have been no history of salvation at all. Therefore it is He, and He alone, who can open the book, and so He goes and receives it from the Father's hand. It is the ascended Christ who can say: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18); and it is He who has the power to open the book. He began at Pentecost when the Church was instituted, and He continues to open seal after seal through its whole history until its earthly career is closed.

As soon as it is established that the Lamb can open the book, there is great jubilation throughout heaven. The 4 living beings, the 24 elders, the hosts of heaven and the whole creation magnify the Lamb of God that was slain.

It is first with chapter vi. that the real unfolding commences, when the Lamb begins to open the seals of the book. Only now does the New Testament history of God's kingdom begin to unfold on the stage of the world. Now, however, everything hastens towards the end. The first 6 seals are very quickly done with. The Lamb rapidly opens the one after the other, and with each of them great events take place. At the first, Christ sallies out—the rider on the white horse—conquering and to conquer. But it is as if the conquering Christ quite disappeared in the tumult of the fray. Only in xix. 11 do we meet Him again, as the One who comes back to earth in glory. But first He loses Himself, as it were, in the contending crowd. It must be so. So long as the Church is abased and struggling, Christ is only invisibly present in it, even if at the beginning, the march out, there has been a visible manifestation by the sign

of the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost. After Him follows the red horse (the second seal), whose rider has a great sword, and is to take away peace from the earth, exactly in accordance with the words of Christ in the days of His flesh: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34-39). It is the Church militant that now begins its career under trials and persecution. With the war follows dearth (the third seal, the rider on the black horse) and disease (the fourth seal, the rider on the pale horse), persecution of Christians (the fifth seal), and finally, great convulsions of nature (the sixth seal). Under these 6 seals we are certainly not to look for definite events in the history of the Church, as so many, especially English interpreters, have done,—in other words, we must not take the predictions literally. How impossible it is to regard them literally we see best at the sixth seal, where it is said that "the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, . . . and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (vi. 12-14). If this had been literally the case, of course, man could no longer be alive upon the earth, and yet in what follows we see plainly enough that men were still living. But what is here pictorially represented is the violent convulsions and grievous tribulations through which the development will pass before it reaches the time of the end which first begins with the seventh seal. There are inward and outward struggles—horrible persecutions on the part of the world and severe punishments on the part of God—through which the last and decisive judgment is already perceived (vi. 17), even if in reality some time must still elapse before it comes.¹

¹ We cannot agree with those who here already see the end, and therefore assume that all that is mentioned under the seventh seal is, as a matter of fact, included in the sixth, and is merely a further unfolding of that. Our reasons we cannot in detail give here; and we limit ourselves to pointing out that the harmony of the book is disturbed by such a view, and that its plan, otherwise so exactly carried out, is departed from. However, we must acknowledge that the contents of the sixth seal are depicted with colours which are borrowed from the sayings of the Lord about His second advent (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Rev. vi. 12 *et seq.* with

Now, we should have expected that chapter vii. would have given us some information about the opening of the seventh seal. But it is as if God had hardly the heart to proclaim the fearful tribulations of the time of Antichrist before He had first given His Church a word of consolation for the time of tribulation, and that is exactly what He does in chapter vii. He gives the 4 angels at the corners of the earth instructions to keep back the storms of the judgments until the servants of God have been sealed on their foreheads, in order that they may be preserved during the coming tribulations (*cf.* Ezek. ix. 4-6, which forms the Old Testament background for what is here described). By this sealing we must doubtless mainly understand this, that God inwardly strengthens and establishes them in grace, gives them spiritual strength for that which is coming. But, in the next place, it probably also implies that He would let His power so appear in them that the whole world would be able to recognise them as His, know them as unmistakably as if His name were written on their foreheads. It is more doubtful whether there was any visible mark imprinted on their foreheads to serve as a protection against the coming troubles, so that the angels of punishment would see the sign and pass by, as the destroying angel in Egypt did when he saw the blood on the door-posts of the houses of the Israelites (Ex. xii. 3-13). One might almost suppose this, for it seems as if the subsequent judgments of God's wrath only affected the wicked in the world and not his sealed ones (*cf.* ix. 4). The tribulations of the sealed do not come directly from God (*i.e.* they are not subjected to the punishments passed by God upon the world), but from the devil whose instruments persecute them.

The number of the sealed is 12 times 12 thousand (*i.e.* a

Matt. xxiv. 29-33). But this only shows that the great day of decision looms so largely at the horizon that it casts its shadow far back over the ages which prepare for its advent. And so, too, the preliminary and partial judgments are seen in the light of this last and greatest one. We even observe this in our Lord's eschatological sayings (Matt. xxiv., xxv.), where the destruction of Jerusalem is seen in the light of the great day of judgment. Therefore it is not strange that both the seer himself and the people here, in our stead, perceived the judgment which is indicated by the opening of the sixth seal (*cf.* Kliefoth's *Komm.*, ii. pp. 77 *et seq.*).

full number of the Church,—in other words, it is the true Church of God which is sealed thus. And when this is designated as a Church of Israel, it is doubtless thereby implied that Israel has already been received into it; but it must not be so understood that the Church consists only of Jews, for, after the fashion of the Revelation, the Old Testament represents the whole Church of God as a new Israel.¹

Now, lest any should doubt that this sealing will actually be sufficient to preserve God's children in tribulation, so that they can endure until the end and be saved, God shows John an innumerable host of all kindreds and tongues (vii. 9). These have just come out of great tribulations (vii. 14), and now stand before the throne robed in white and with palm branches in their hands, as a sign that they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and have overcome all opposition.

Here, then, we have a hint that the conversion both of Israel and of the heathen will take place before the end comes.

Now follows the opening of the seventh seal, and there is silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. It is as if the heavenly hosts held their breath in extreme suspense, in expectation that the end is coming; and like incense the prayers of the saints ascend to God, perhaps especially the prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus." But the end is not yet, for now come the 7 trumpets (viii. 2—xi. 15). The contents of these trumpets are fearful judgments upon the ungodly world which now becomes quickly ripe for the coming of Antichrist.

We cannot go into the details of these plagues, where manifestly to a great extent the expressions are not meant to be taken literally. The symbolic here plays a great part. That is already indicated by the use of the biblical symbolical numbers. Thus in the three first plagues there is constant reference to a third part (*vide* viii. 7—12). A literal exposition would here lead to impossibilities. It is

¹ Cf. Madsen, pp. 117–20. Contrast also Revelation iii. 12 with xxi. 12. What in the latter passage seems to refer to Israel is promised in the former to all Christians.

said, for instance, that a burning star fell on a third part of the rivers and fountains of waters (viii. 10). That this is a physical impossibility—regarded literally—speaks for itself. As a rule the most of what falls under the first six trumpets is of such a nature that it is impossible to separate the actual events which are to take place from the figurative dress. Yet we can gather this much from the whole, that grievous plagues and violent convulsions in nature and among the nations will precede and prepare for the time of Antichrist, which, in what follows, is more particularly to be described.

Only now, in the latter half of the domain of the sixth trumpet (xi. 1–14), does the prophecy again assume a somewhat clearer outline, and it is quite evident that we here enter upon a new section of time, the first half of the age of Antichrist. The new section is introduced by a significant act which recalls the sealing in chapter vii. For John gets the injunction to measure the temple of the Holy City, with the altar and them that worship there, but to omit the measurement of the court, because it is to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles forty and two months. The meaning is evidently this, that the Lord now, when a new period of time—the last before His advent—is on the point of beginning, wishes fully to ascertain His true and real Church, the worshippers who are in His temple itself. The court, with its half-Christians who have not in reality entered into the true sanctuary of the Church, had no longer any meaning, and could consequently be left out of account (need not therefore be measured), for in the times of purification which were now to enter such persons would not be able to stand their ground; they would fall away in the time of temptation, and would speedily join the open enemies of the Church (“the Gentiles”), who would be in power for the next 42 months (*i.e.* for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years).

But not even in the great time of apostasy—which, according to the evidence of the Apostle Paul, should precede the personal advent of Antichrist, just as that, again, should precede the advent of the Lord (2 Thess. ii. 3)—would the Lord be left without witnesses. The very reverse; for He

would cause two great witnesses to appear, who during that self-same period of 1260 days (42 months, $3\frac{1}{2}$ years), should testify vigorously against the power of wickedness and seal their testimony by strange signs and mighty miracles, as punishments on the enemies of God (xi. 3 *et seq.*). Like Zerubbabel and Joshua in the days of the Prophet Zechariah (*cf.* xi. 4 with iv. 3–14), these were to stand there like two sappy olive trees—full of the oil of the Holy Ghost—in the soil of a spiritually parched age, and drop their glorious fruits around. But their time of activity would be short. After these 42 months the beast which arises from the abyss (*i.e.* Antichrist, of whom we hear more in chap. xiii.) will have power to smite them to death (xi. 7, 8). Certainly they would come to life again in $3\frac{1}{2}$ days, corresponding to the period of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years during which they had laboured, but only in order that they might at once make their ascension to heaven; for their time of witnessing upon the earth was already over.¹ But at their ascension there would take place a great miracle of punishment, which would cause the death of many in the city and lead the rest to give glory to the God of heaven (xi. 13). Possibly these last are such weak Christians as for a time have been carried away by the overwhelming persecutions, but who now, by the combined influence of the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses, in addition to the miracle of punishment, again come to their right mind.²

We have come to the end of the first half of the Anti-

¹ Who are these two witnesses? To this we can only answer, that according to the Revelation they are undoubtedly two real persons who will appear in the first half of the Antichrist's week of years, and therefore not merely personifications of something impersonal (*e.g.*, the old and the new covenant, the law and the gospel) or collectives (the Jewish and the Gentile-Christian Church), as some have thought. Many of the ancients believed that these witnesses were Enoch and Elijah—who both ascended alive to heaven—or Moses and Elijah, who should return to earth before the coming of the Lord, and they appealed to Malachi iv. 5 in corroboration of their opinion. But Matthew xvii. 11–13 shows that these words of the prophet found their fulfilment in John the Baptist, who in a spiritual sense was a new Elijah.

² We must, however, in this connection draw attention to the fact, that according to the text it is not quite certain that they really repented with all their heart. The expression “give glory to the God of heaven” (xi. 13) may certainly imply an actual conversion (xiv. 7, xvi. 9; Jer. xiii. 16), but it

christ's week of years, the half which still falls within the period of the sixth trumpet.

And now the seventh trumpet sounds (xi. 15), and it seems as if there were an expectation both in heaven and on earth that the end is coming (xi. 15–19). But Antichrist himself must first appear, and before his appearance is described in chapter xiii. *et seq.* John has a new vision, which, in a figurative way, shows him what will happen to God's Church in the greatest of all tribulations, in the time of the supremacy of Antichrist (the time of the beast, xiii. 1 *et seq.*). This vision occupies the whole of chapter xii.

John sees a woman, clothed with the splendours of heaven, who in great travail gives birth to a man-child, whom a great red dragon with 7 crowned heads and 10 horns threatens to devour. But the child is saved by being caught up to heaven, and the woman herself escapes by fleeing into the wilderness and nourishing herself there 1260 days (xii. 6), or a time and times and half a time, *i.e.* $3\frac{1}{2}$ years (xii. 14). The dragon is defeated. During the pursuit and attempt to secure the child, which was taken up to heaven, the dragon is met by the Archangel Michael, thrust down to earth, and condemned as an accuser to be forever kept out of heaven (xii. 7–10; *cf.* Job i. 6–12; Zech. iii. 1 *et seq.*). When he attempts to persecute the woman, the earth itself comes to her aid and swallows up the flood with which he seeks to drown her (xii. 15, 16). Yet he still continues to "make war with the remnant of her seed" (xii. 17).

Now who is this woman? That it is the Church there can be no doubt whatever; but what Church? Is it the Old Testament Church, that gave birth to Christ according to the flesh (the man-child)? Since the description of the man-child (xii. 5) best fits the glorified Christ at the Father's right hand, this might seem to be the most natural explanation. However, the context shows that this view is impossible; for there is manifest reference to the state of

expresses sometimes merely the acknowledgment of God's power. In this last sense even Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 37, v. 18), Darius (Dan. vi. 27), and Cyrus (Ezra i. 2) in their way gave honour to the God of heaven, but continued to be heathens.

matters at the last. This is evident from what immediately precedes and follows. The woman can therefore only be God's true Church, such as it is in the middle of the last week of years; and the period during which the woman remains in concealment (xii. 6-14) is naturally the latter half of this week, *i.e.* during the supremacy of Antichrist, which, according to xiii. 5, is to last 42 months.

But then, what is the child to whom the woman gives birth? Here we are face to face with a great difficulty. According to xii. 5 it almost appears to be Christ Himself; but in what sense can He be said to have been born of the Church at that particular time? It has been answered: From these very conditions of the Church Christ was born as the judge of the world, *i.e.* this final state of purification of the Church which has now begun is the condition that He can come again as such a judge.¹ But even if this, as a last resource, could be called a "birth,"—which, however, we greatly doubt,—it is quite irreconcilable with the fact that the child that was born in order to escape the attempts of the dragon was caught up unto God and His throne; for Christ sits all the time at the Father's right hand, and from the moment of His ascension had escaped the dragon's (the devil's) attempts.² We are compelled, therefore, with Burger, to see in the man-child which the woman bears, and which is caught up to the throne of God, a designation for that part of the Church militant which in this time of tribulation by a blessed death is born into and transferred to the Church triumphant in heaven, and thereby escapes for ever the persecutions of Satan.³ Certainly this explanation is hedged with difficulties, especially by reason of xii. 5, which most undoubtedly best fits Christ Himself; but still, these difficulties are less than those which the other view entails. That an assemblage of the children of the Church of God—consequently a collective conception—in Scripture may be designated

¹ So Kliefoth, Madsen, and others.

² What Kliefoth (*Komm.*, ii. pp. 26-28) adduces in order to meet this objection has, more than anything else, convinced us that it is irrefutable.

³ *Cf.* the designation of the death-days of Christians as their "birthdays" in the Ancient Church.

as "a man-child," we see in Isaiah lxvi. 7-9, to which the passage under consideration seems to look back. And when in Revelation ii. 27 it is said of everyone that "overcometh," that "he shall rule the nations with a rod of iron," it is not apparent why the same thing cannot be said here in xii. 5 about the whole multitude of victors. These will then be the "man-child," who by a blissful death issues from the mother-womb of the Church militant. Because they are now to be permitted to rule with Christ, there is also attributed to them the government over the people ("to rule all nations with a rod of iron," xii. 5) which really belongs to Him, their Lord and King.

After these remarks anent the knotty point on which the fundamental view of this chapter depends we shall briefly endeavour to set forth its contents.

The martyr-church of that day is grievously oppressed by the might of Antichrist which proceeds from the dragon (the devil). In this travail she gives birth, in the way referred to, to children, especially the martyrs. (The most who die at that time die perhaps as martyrs?). Yet even of the souls of these the dragon would like to have possession, wherefore in his rage he pursues them right up to heaven (in order to accuse them before God as sinners? *Cf.* xii. 10, "the accuser of our brethren"); but he is defeated by the angels of God. He then vents all his exasperation upon the woman (the Church militant on earth), and she must flee to the wilderness; for there is no place for her in the kingdom of Antichrist, where the dragon and the beast prevail and wage open war against the saints (xiii. 7 *et seq.*). Whether this wilderness is a definite locality on the earth, or only a figurative expression for the isolation, the solitary and fugitive position she must occupy, we cannot determine. At any rate, she must spiritually flee away from, keep outside of, the whole sphere of Antichrist's activity. Christians and antichristians cannot even in daily and civil life have intercourse with each other, as Christians and non-Christians nowadays do; for the contrast has sharpened itself into open hostility. Only the one who has the mark of the beast can buy and sell, and actually enjoy civil rights

in this kingdom (xiii. 17). And so Christians become at least homeless there, and live as in a wilderness.

But not even in this state of flight and retirement does the woman (the Church) get peace from the dragon. With the floods of tribulation he seeks to drown her altogether. But God averts the tribulation by a miracle (the earth swallows up the floods, xii. 16) which we cannot further explain, and He also supports her during this life in the wilderness for 1260 days.

When the dragon sees that he cannot compass the destruction of the woman herself (*i.e.* the Church in its entirety), he then seeks to take the life of the individual members of it (by waging "war with the remnant of her seed," xii. 17).

Only after the Lord had comforted John by showing him how He would stand by His Church in the time of Antichrist does He unveil the picture of this age to him in chapter xiii. *et seq.*, which first gives to us the real contents of the seventh seal.

This section begins with the words: "He stood upon the sand of the sea."¹ The dragon advances to the shore of the sea, the sea swarming with the people of the world, in order, as it were, to conjure up the beast from the already antichristian people of the world as its mature offspring.² And true enough, up from the sea rises a fearful creature which has 7 heads and 10 horns, and likewise unites in itself the forms of the most terrible beasts of prey (the leopard, the bear, and the lion). A miracle happens to this beast. It receives a deadly wound, but that is healed, to the astonishment of the whole world. Now is its might irresistible, and the multitudes worship the beast. This might,

¹ So must the words, according to the best authorities, be rendered, and not "I stood upon the sand of the sea." The Revised Version gives the proper reading.

² Both the section about the beasts, and all that follows of the Revelation right up to the end, will now be dealt with very briefly, since a more detailed examination of the most important points in it will be made under the different sections (Antichrist, the millennial kingdom, judgment, everlasting death, and eternal life). Here our chief purpose is only to point out the place of these main incidents in the prophetic sequence of the Revelation.

however, is not derived from itself, but from the dragon (the devil), and so all who worship the beast also worship the dragon (xiii. 4). It is called a beast because it is that which pertains to the beast in humanity, the rapacious, voracious, insatiable sinful desires, that in it reaches its highest development and is filled with satanic powers. But as a rule it acts as a human being and is in reality a man, speaks blasphemously of God and all that is holy, wages war upon the saints (those who have been sealed) and overcomes them, not inwardly, only outwardly, with merely secular power, so that they become the objects of great persecution and tribulation; and much patience and faith are required to ward off despair (xiii. 5-10). Thereafter those "whose names are not written in the book of life" (the spurious, the non-sealed) are won over, even spiritually, by the beast, and become its adherents and worshippers (xiii. 8). The power of the beast is at once an internal and external one. It rules as a king over both souls and bodies, and this supremacy lasts for 42 months (xiii. 5), or $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, which is the latter portion of Antichrist's great week of years, the time of his actual supremacy,—a period which must be placed in connection with the 42 months of the age of preparation referred to in chapters xi. and xii. (*cf.* xi. 3 and xii. 6, 14).

That this beast is actually Antichrist appears in the clearest possible way by a comparison of the Book of Daniel with 2 Thessalonians ii., which we hope to consider more particularly in the section treating of Antichrist.

Immediately after this beast rises out of the sea there emerges another from the earth (xiii. 1 *et seq.*), which works along with it and supports it. It is that beast which later on is called "the false prophet" (xvi. 13, xix. 20, xx. 10). It represents the prophetic power of Antichrist, as the first beast represents the kingly power. It rises up from the earth; for this false prophet does not spring, like the true one, from above (Jas. iii. 17), but from beneath; it is earthly and draws to the earth, draws the minds of the people away from heaven and everything heavenly.

It performs signs and wonders, as the Lord himself had said the false prophets in the last days should do, and it thereby inclines the hearts of men to the first beast and leads them to worship it. And it sets up a worship of Antichrist where the image of Antichrist becomes the object of adoration (xiii. 14, 15), and it is able to breathe life into this image, so that, to its infatuated worshippers, it stands as a bright and living form. And just as God had sealed His own, so this beast sets a mark upon the hand and forehead of the followers of Antichrist (xiii. 16), since it will imitate God also in this respect (*cf.* iii. 12 and vii. 3). Without this mark "no man might buy or sell" (enjoy the rights of citizenship in the kingdom of Antichrist). This mark is Antichrist's own name, *i.e.* all who desire to escape his enmity and persecution must openly confess him and call him their Lord (xiii. 16, 17). Whether the expression may also have a literal meaning (that there is a really visible mark) we do not venture to say.

About the number of Antichrist (xiii. 18) we have previously spoken.

The dragon, the first beast, and the second beast in a sense-form—as has been earlier pointed out—the antichristian Trinity (the Father, Son, and Spirit). But it is quite evident that the second beast does not possess the same independent position as the first. Just as the work of the Spirit essentially is to explain Christ (John xv. 26), so is the work of the second beast to explain the first and get men to acknowledge it. It is the representative of the antichristian spiritual power, as the first beast represents the antichristian sovereignty. These two powers therefore will in the last times have each its personal representative, and they will co-operate in the great purpose of antichristianizing humanity, and thereby ripening humanity for, and calling for, the judgment.

And this judgment is not long delayed. It is certainly doubtful whether we may venture to regard the antichristian week of years quite literally (7 years). The purpose of specifying the time is possibly only to show that this wicked attempt to arrange a covenant between humanity

and the satanic powers (the beasts spring from the dragon, xiii. 2) will also have its covenant time (7 is the covenant number), its cycle. But everything indicates that the period will be brief. Already, in chapter xiv., the preaching of judgment on Antichrist and his kingdom commences.

This section begins by showing us that the Lord has kept His promise to His sealed (xiv. 1-5). No doubt Antichrist has brought upon them tribulations, but he has not spiritually overcome them. On the contrary, the Lord has preserved them, and they stand undefiled before Him at the close of the antichristian age. This augurs ill for the power and kingdom of Antichrist. Now the Lord's elect have become purified and ripened, and the time of deliverance is at hand. And the antichristian world has become ripe for destruction, and the judgment begins.

This judgment is first announced in general terms, and in expressions anticipatory of the events (xiv. 6-20) which are to be afterwards more fully described in detail (chaps. xv.-xix.).

This general and preliminary announcement of the judgment begins by an angel from God proclaiming to all people that the hour of judgment is come, and then with the zeal of eternity ("the everlasting gospel," xiv. 6) he for the last time offers salvation to those who will repent (xiv. 6, 7). Thereafter another angel pronounces doom upon Babylon,¹ the capital of the kingdom of Antichrist (xiv. 8), and a third pronounces doom upon all the followers of Antichrist, and likewise upon Antichrist himself (xiv. 9 *et seq.*).

Here again we stand at the end. The time of the seventh trumpet is past and the Lord comes for the judgment. He is already to be seen in the distance sitting on a white cloud (xiv. 14). The time has come when the Lord Himself with sickle in hand will reap His saints who are now ripe

¹ Where this city is we do not know; but it is quite manifest from what is said that the capital of the kingdom of Antichrist is referred to. That it is called Babel (Babylon) is because Babel was the place where the rebellious idea of a kingdom of the world (rebellion against God in heaven-storming defiance and self-deification) first arose (Gen. xi. 1-9). It was also in Babel, Babylon, that the first biblical world-kingdom was formed under Nebuchadnezzar (*cf.* Dan. ii. 31-43, especially ii. 38).

for reaping (xiv. 15, 16). And the time has also come when the reapers (the angels) will pass over the earth with their sickles and reap the crop it bears (xiv. 17, 18), as the Lord Himself had predicted would be the case at the "end of the world" (Matt. xiii. 39-41).¹ It is a gathering of all the wicked, who now, as full ripe grapes (ripened in ungodliness), are to be cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God; and that which is trodden out is blood (for the judgment over them involves death and destruction), blood in great streams which rises up to the bridles of the horses (xiv. 20).

But even this judgment has its sections and periods, beginning with the 7 vials of wrath that are poured out upon the kingdom of Antichrist, connected with which there is a succession of fearful sentences upon that kingdom, and ending when the Lord Himself at last comes and casts the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire and destroys the remnant of their avowed followers (chaps. xv.-xix.).

These 7 vials of wrath have much in common with the 7 trumpets (viii. 7-xi. 19), and are, like them, very obscure, so that a satisfactory explanation of all the details is quite impossible. They are distinguished from the trumpets essentially in this, that they follow each other more quickly, blow upon blow (because we have come nearer to the close, and everything therefore hastens more speedily to the end), and that the doom they bring upon the earth is more comprehensive, yea, quite universal; whilst the sentences of the trumpets only affected a part of the earth, and that the smaller part (*vide* viii. 7-12).

Then the 7 vials recall the 7 seals (vi. 1 *et seq.*), with which they have this in common, that the events on the earth are introduced with something corresponding to them in heaven, whence issue the orders concerning what is to happen on the earth. Chapters iv. and v. form such a "heavenly" introduction to the 7 seals, and so far to the whole Book of the Future, whilst the trumpets and

¹ Here it is the Lord Himself who reaps the pious, whilst the angels reap the ungodly. In other places in Scripture (Matt. xiii. 39-41, xxiv. 31) the reaping of both is relegated to the angels.

the vials are a further extension of the contents of the 7 seals. This again is repeated with the 7 vials (xvi. 2 *et seq.*), since these in xv. 1–xvi. 1 are introduced in such a way as to show us how that which was to happen on the earth had been determined in heaven amid the rejoicing of the angels and the saved.

We cannot enter upon the details of the great section which now follows; we must limit ourselves to a few words about its great fundamental idea.

The special announcement of doom really begins at xvi. 2. One angel after another appears and pours out his vial of wrath upon the earth, thereby designating fearful plagues which through divine miracles of punishment are to fall upon the antichristian world as precursors of the coming personal judge (Christ). Against these miracles of punishment Antichrist is unable to defend himself and his followers, either by his arts of witchcraft or by his mighty hosts (xiv. 13–16).

Whilst the vials of wrath themselves contain the sentence of punishment upon the antichristian world, yet they are to be consummated through the great wonders in the physical world which, according to the intimations of Christ, will precede His advent (Matt. xxiv. 29); but there is connected with the seventh vial a more exhaustive and more special announcement of how this judgment will reach and destroy the antichristian kingdom's capital, Babylon, the great harlot, who sits upon the beast (xvii. 3), *i.e.* is supported by the strength of Antichrist (xvii. 1 *et seq.*).¹ This sentence seems to be carried out in a double way; for, in the first place, the very capital itself is afflicted by the plagues from God which come upon the whole kingdom; and, in the next place, its final

¹ Against all opposite views (*e.g.*, that the harlot is the ungodly world or the Roman Church, or the papacy, etc.) we must distinctly maintain that the harlot is a great city (xviii. 10), which, like Rome, is built on many hills (*cf.* xvii. 9). And it is evident from the whole section that this great city is actually a world-city in the time of Antichrist. Thence issues ungodliness, as from a mighty fountain, to all people, which is indicated by their all being made "drunk with the wine of her fornication" (xvii. 2). This city is the heart of the antichristian kingdom's pulsating life of profligacy and impious hostility to God.

overthrow seems to be brought about by a terrible civil strife within the kingdom, since the very beast with its 10 horns (the 10 kings who co-operate with Antichrist, xvii. 12) will rise against the capital of this kingdom and quite destroy it (xvii. 16), whereby involuntarily they come to serve God, and execute His judgment of wrath upon the harlot (xvii. 17).

That is the main thought in this section, which otherwise is taken up by a further description of the harlot and the doom which falls upon her (xvii. 1–xviii. 8), to which there are added lamentation over her fall on the part of all her followers (xviii. 9–24), and a pæan of jubilee among the angels of God and the hosts of saints that this great seducer has finally fallen (xix. 1–10).

But Antichrist himself (the first beast), with his double (the second beast, the false prophet) and a section of his followers, still remains amid the fragments of his already ruined kingdom. Whilst the Lord has caused His angels—with the vials of wrath—to execute judgment upon the whole kingdom, and has so arranged that internal dissension between the kingdom and its capital becomes the latter's ruin, He has reserved for Himself personally the carrying out of judgment upon Antichrist and the false prophet. That, too, the Apostle Paul had previously intimated when he said of Antichrist that "the Lord shall destroy (him) with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8). It is to this revelation of the glory of the Christ that we are now coming (Rev. xix. 11–21). Here once more we meet the rider on the white horse (xix. 11), of whom there has been no mention since Rev. vi. 2. But now He is no more lost to sight (as formerly) amidst His contending host, whom He invisibly supports in the sacred conflict; no, He now leads the battle in person. Now, He has not only one crown upon His head,—the royal crown of the glorified,—but many crowns (xix. 12), as evidence that all opponents have been overcome by Him, and that to Him every knee shall bow. The sharp sword with which He smites His enemies issues from His mouth, *i.e.* merely a word from Him and they all lie in the dust at His feet. Even Antichrist is destroyed by this

sword, as Paul points out when he says that this greatest and bitterest opponent shall be consumed with the spirit of His mouth (2 Thess. ii. 8). And in the triumphal procession He is accompanied by the hosts of heaven upon white horses, emblems of victory and purity (xix. 11). He is, at the outset, so certain of victory that He invites all the birds of prey to a banquet on the carcasses of His fallen foes (xix. 17, 18). Now Antichrist assembles his surviving supporters for a last desperate struggle (xix. 19); but there is no mention of any battle, and there can be no suggestion of any such, for no mortal can fight with the personal God, so far as the question of might is concerned. The beast and the false prophet are simply taken and cast into the lake of fire (the real hell—the “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” Matt. xxv. 41), and their followers are slain with the sword, and their bodies are given as a banquet to the birds of prey (xix. 20, 21). Thus Antichrist and his kingdom are destroyed for ever.

It might be expected that the Last Judgment would now take place. However, this is not so. The kingdom of God has still a portion of its career to complete before time ends. But before this history is continued Christ has important business with the old dragon, the serpent, from whom both the beast and the false prophet, who have now received their doom, had their origin. He causes one of his angels to bind him, cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, so that during the next 1000 years he shall no more be able to go up and down in the earth seducing the unwary (xx. 1–3). This must at least imply that for a complete historical period (1000 is the number of perfection in its highest power) he will not be permitted to exercise any direct influence upon the inhabitants of the earth.

Thereupon the Lord awakes those who had been slain during the persecutions of Antichrist (xx. 4), possibly all His saints, and causes them (along with the living who have been faithful to Christ in the time of Antichrist, and who are probably now quickly transformed) to sit on thrones and “judge,” *i.e.* reign with Him during the whole period of

Antichrist's impotence (xx. 6); and, of course, also later, but this preliminary governing before the final judgment is, as it were, a legacy which is given them by anticipation, *i.e.* before and in preference to the others. This awakening is the first resurrection (xx. 5, 6) in contrast to the second or general resurrection which is mentioned in xx. 13, and which will not take place until the close of the 1000 years.¹

For reasons which in a subsequent section we shall indicate in detail, we must suppose that the Lord, after this resurrection, returns to heaven with those who have risen, and permits them to reign with Him there, in the glory of heaven ("the millennial kingdom" in heaven).

Meanwhile the earth has not become depopulated. The real and open followers of Antichrist are doubtless slain, and the elect of God have been taken up to heaven. But there have been many tribes on the confines of the world who have been less affected by the efforts of the anti-christian forces, and therefore have not been destroyed by the judgment upon Antichrist and his kingdom. And there have probably also been many Christians who yielded to Antichrist for a time, but repented when the judgment with its vials of wrath began to fall. These half-hearted Christians are not worthy to share in the preliminary glory of the millennium. Now they gather again into a Church on earth (*cf.* "the camp of the saints," xx. 9), and that a Church which seems to have peculiar advantages and opportunities for prospering, since the devil is now fettered, so that men have only the world and their sinful flesh to contend with. The life of this Church becomes the millennial kingdom on earth. Of the state of this earthly Church during this period, which has generally been supposed to be specially glorious, we know very little. Yet we may, from xx. 8, infer that it does not completely permeate the nations at the outskirts of the world with the spirit of Christianity, since these in the period that follows afford a convenient sphere of

¹ The further development and establishment of these points is reserved for the section about the millennial kingdom. Here we are merely indicating preliminarily the main features of the whole with the brevity of a summary.

activity for the new seductions of the devil when at last his fetters are removed.

As soon as this period, which is designated by the 1000 years, has expired, the devil is unbound (xx. 7), and he then, as has been indicated, finds a good soil for his influence in those peoples furthest removed from the Church's centre, and therefore less affected by Christianity. Then he now incites to wage war against the Church of God (xx. 8), which eventually seems to be environed in its capital "the beloved city"¹ (xx. 9), as the Jews were environed in Jerusalem immediately before their destruction by the Gentiles (in the year 70 A.D.). But now fire descends from heaven (xx. 9). The Lord comes for the Last Judgment (xx. 11). The devil receives the same doom as his creatures, the beast and the false prophet (xx. 10), and all the dead arise (and the living are transformed) in order to appear for sentence (xx. 12, 13), by which every one whose name is not written in the book of life is relegated to the lake of fire (xx. 15; *cf.* xxi. 8), whither the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet have already been consigned.

With this Judgment is closed the history of the old earth. From other passages in the Word of God we know that it will now undergo a process of purification by fire (2 Pet. iii. 10), by which it will be remelted and transformed into "a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13). It is this new earth, peopled by absolutely righteous and holy ones, which is described in the remainder of the Revelation's Book of the Future (xxi. 1–xxii. 5), to which we now turn.

Here we must at once reject a very deep-rooted misunderstanding. It is generally supposed that when the Judgment has been held God will ascend again to heaven with all the saved, and they will always remain with Him in glory there. But the Revelation, properly understood, teaches us something quite different. We shall not ascend to God in heaven, but God in heaven will descend with all His glory to the new earth and there live in our midst. It is expressly said that John "saw the new Jerusalem coming down from God out

¹ Whether this "beloved city" is the old Jerusalem restored we dare not say.

of heaven" (Rev. xxi. 2, 10), *i.e.* it comes down to the new earth. It is no longer said that men ascend to God (as now by a blissful death), but the very reverse, that "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them" (xxi. 3). And that, too, agrees well with the history of salvation. It began in Paradise where God visibly walked about among His children (Gen. iii. 8). But this is just the renewed and completed Paradise, with the tree of life in the midst of it (ii. 7, xxii. 2). The end is like the beginning, only much more glorious because it is the completion.

We shall not meanwhile delay over the beautiful and very figurative description of the new earth—with the new Jerusalem—and the life there. On many points here we have difficulty in separating the reality from the picture; but this much at least we can perceive from the whole, that here are indescribable glory and inconceivable bliss. Here we have the perfect fulfilment of the declaration that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9).

We shall, however, return to the contents of this last section of the book when we treat of the question of everlasting bliss.

The book closes with a short addendum (xxii. 6–21), which contains exhortations and a longing for the early coming of the Lord, to which He Himself adds His Amen.

As we close our résumé of the substance of the Revelation, we must again expressly call attention to the fact that this only professes to be a survey and not an exposition. The reader must therefore not be surprised if he finds that we have passed by in silence many obscure points; for it was not within the scope of our plan to explain everything. It has been our purpose only to read out of the Revelation the main features in the future of God's kingdom in their mutual connection, in order afterwards to dwell a little more particularly on the most important of them separately.

*B.—THE GREAT EVENTS WHICH PREPARE FOR THE
TIME OF THE END*

When a new road or railway is to be constructed, the very first work undertaken is that of surveying the line and staking it off. During the course of this survey special notice may be paid to the more prominent features of the line,—the great gradients here or there, the hills which must be tunnelled through, the rocks which must be blasted away, the large bridges which must be erected. But meanwhile the surveyors do not linger over these natural difficulties, they only note them in passing; for it is the direction and course of the line as a whole that must first be attended to.

Only when they have finished that do they take details into consideration and examine more closely the main features of the work one by one, go thoroughly into the difficulties connected with each of them, calculate the costs, and determine what prospect there is of overcoming those difficulties and carrying out the plan indicated.

The preliminary survey of the future of the kingdom of God which we have just been endeavouring to give according to the Revelation of John is, if you will, such a survey of the line as will show us the trend and purpose of future events. In the course of this survey we have had occasion, as it were in passing, to fix the attention on some sections of this line which had special importance, and which we have shown would demand closer and more careful consideration. It is such a consideration we are now about to give to those matters.

It will be remembered that those more prominent features of the line were rare in the former and greater portion of its course, but increased in number and importance in proportion as we approached its end, and that they were especially very imposing towards the consummation, where also some factors, which at an earlier stage we had casually met with, now came into prominence and importance. Thus the material for what follows has already been given. We have, for instance, to deal partly with such significant features in the

development as do not really belong to the time of the end, but yet have their great importance for it in the way of preparation (the conversion of the Gentiles and of the Jews), partly with such as actually belong to the end (Antichrist and the millennial kingdom). It is to the former of these two classes that we at present mean to devote ourselves.

The reader will likewise remember that in the first part of the Revelation's Book of the Future (iv. 1—x. 11, consequently until the beginning of the time of Antichrist) we could see, for the most part, only a general characterization of the convulsions and struggles of the kingdom of God, but it was not possible for us to point to individual definite events which might be made known to men in advance. The narrative was in a sense like a stormy sea with wave following wave, so that it was impossible to lay hold of any definite, palpable fact which might be more closely observed, measured, and compared with something already known. But exceptions to this were found in the two strange features we lighted upon as early as in chapter vii. The great multitude of those sealed before the time of the end began was certainly a complete Church number ($12 \times 12,000$) of all the tribes of Israel (*cf.* Rom. xi. 26, "All Israel shall be saved"). But then there was also an innumerable multitude "of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues" ("the fulness of the Gentiles," Rom. xi. 25) standing before the throne (Rev. vii. 4, 9). Here we know where we are again.

Admitting that the expression "Israel" in the Revelation is sometimes used of the Church of God in its entirety, just as Paul calls all believers the "Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16), there can scarcely be any doubt that here, where the sealed of Israel are placed in juxtaposition with the great multitude of the saved from among the Gentiles, there must essentially and emphatically be reference to the conversion of the Jews (at any rate, the Jews must now have been received into the Church). Of the Gentiles there is not mentioned any such full Church number; for it is scarcely the meaning of Scripture that all heathen nations

will be converted in the same sense and to the same extent as "all Israel." But the innumerable multitude of the Gentiles plainly points to a grand conversion of the Gentiles; and since among this multitude there are to be found individuals from all nations, it is quite apparent that the gospel at that time, in some way or other, must have reached them all.

Consequently, we have here an indirect prediction both of the conversion of the Jews and of the preaching of the gospel to all nations.

But we have more than that; we have also a proof that it is a misunderstanding to refer these two great events to the millennial kingdom, as so many have done in the past and still do to-day; for from the context it is clear that what is represented to us in Revelation vii. precedes the time of Antichrist, which in turn precedes the millennial kingdom, as we have pointed out at an earlier stage.

It is strange that not merely in the Book of Revelation, but in all the unfulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament and the New, we scarcely find, before the time of the end (to which, as has been said, Antichrist belongs), any features other than these two which can be recognised. Everything else that has been predicted is drawn with such indistinct outlines, or clothed in such figurative language, that we can read nothing definite out of it. That cannot be accidental. It must have its significance, its special reason. And the reason can hardly be any other than this, that these are the two great events which are to prepare for the end, and after these have taken place the end itself will come. And this is expressly said about the one of them: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14); and since the other is conditioned by this (Rom. xi. 25, 26), the same thing must hold good of them both. It is for this reason that they tower above everything else that is to happen, and, as it were, loom against the blue sky away on the horizon.

The peculiar relation of these two great events to the time of the end will perhaps become still clearer when we

attempt to answer the following double question : Why must just these two events come to pass before the end arrives ? and why must the end arrive as soon as those two events have come to pass ?

The answer to the former part of the question must undoubtedly be that the history of the human race—seen from God's side—is the story of salvation, and that therefore the salvation of mankind is the goal of history. Originally everything else on earth was created for man, and man for God.¹ The task—the great problem of the history of the world—is therefore this, to restore the man, who has fallen by sin out of fellowship with God, to that fellowship. But since man is a free being, this can only be done by giving him a choice ; in other words, by the offer of salvation, so that it can either be accepted or rejected. This is done by the gospel. Therefore the gospel must be preached to all before the history of humanity can be concluded. Only then has the goal of salvation been reached. And with this the salvation of Israel is indissolubly connected, as we shall try to show in what follows.

But the latter half of the question also demands an answer.

The answer has to some degree already been given in what we have said, for as the end cannot come before the goal of history (*i.e.* the goal God has appointed) has been attained, so no satisfactory reason can be suggested why God should continue to delay the conclusion after the goal has actually been reached. Therefore it is said, as we have seen : “Then shall the end come,” an end which, however, has

¹ That man (*microcosmos*) is the goal of the whole creation (*macrocosmos*), even the heathen seem to some extent to have suspected. The Greek mythology has in a profound manner expressed this in the legend of the Theban Sphinx, whose riddle Œdipus solved by giving the answer “Man.” The Christian sees some distance further ; he sees that man himself is a riddle, and that the solution to it is God, apart from whom the life of man becomes an inexplicable accident without purpose and plan. And as a result of this consciousness he says with the psalmist, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God” (Ps. xlii. 2). *Cf.* also Pascal's beautiful words : “If man was not created for God, why then is he only happy in God ?” and Augustine's familiar saying : “For Thyself has Thou created us, O Lord, and our heart is uneasy until it rests in Thee.”

its stages to go through, and we shall consider these in the next section.

But there is still another reason. At the time of the end (from and including the Antichrist's week of years), the hostility between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan comes to a head in a last decisive conflict. But this cannot happen before both have run their race and completed their development. This development, so far as the kingdom of God is concerned, presupposes that it will embrace "Israel and the nations," or—as the order has now become through the long hardening of Israel—the "nations and Israel." No doubt this is only the one side of the development, the external. But by the side of this, and hand in hand with it, there naturally goes an inner development, a constantly increasing ripening which both qualifies and is qualified by the Church's outward growth, and when both of these kinds of development have reached their goal the development is ripe for being suspended.

But along with the development of the kingdom of God there goes also a steady development of the world which lieth in wickedness (1 John v. 19), and whose God is the devil (2 Cor. iv. 4); in other words, of the kingdom of Satan. The more the kingdom of God outwardly grows and inwardly ripens, the more is the kingdom of Satan incited to hatred and opposition to it, and advances in this way to its own maturity (in wickedness).

Now when these two kingdoms have reached their full maturity, and the contrast between them thereby has developed to its utmost limit, the final and decisive conflict between them—a life and death struggle—must necessarily take place. It is this struggle we have in the Antichrist's week of years, and it is this struggle to which the Lord puts an end by His personal interference on behalf of His followers, His sentence upon Antichrist, with which the development meanwhile comes to its close.

And so it is no mere accident that the conversion of the Gentiles and that of the Jews are the two main events which must take place before the time of the end comes. They

are the most important moments in the outward development of the kingdom of God. This again stands in the closest connection with its inward ripening, and both together incite the kingdom of Satan to an ever greater opposition which then ends, and must end, by a collision between these kingdoms, each of which is fully developed in its own way. This collision will take place, in the manner indicated, in the time of Antichrist, of which we shall have more to say later on.

After these introductory remarks about the conversion of the Gentiles and the Jews, we turn now to consider the subject in detail, and to show that it is actually the teaching of Scripture that both shall be converted before the end comes; but we premise that here we can only refer to a selection of the relevant passages of Scripture, and that space does not permit us to give an exposition of each particular passage, which, however, is the less necessary, since the majority of them are clear enough of themselves.

1. *The Preaching of the Gospel to all Nations, and the Entrance of the Fulness of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God*

When regard is paid to the fact that the Old Testament age was Israel's time, it is wonderful how very rich it is in promises implying that even the Gentiles will one day have a part in the salvation which first and foremost was manifested for the chosen people. The Old Testament has certainly been unjustly blamed for a "particularist narrowness" that did not admit of salvation to more than one people. The charge does not affect God or His promises, but only the blindness of Judaism to, and its misunderstanding of, the words of promise.

In the very first book of the Bible the promise has a universal character; for when God says to Abraham, that in his seed should "all the nations of the earth be blest" (Gen. xxii. 18; cf. xii. 3, xviii. 18), it is expressed as plainly as possible that the blessing issuing from the Messiah should really reach all nations. And, moreover, when it is said of the "Prince of Peace," that "unto Him shall the obedience of

the peoples be" (Gen. xlix. 10 R.V.), this also points quite decisively in the same direction.

In the Book of Psalms the same idea appears again and again. "Ask of Me," says Jehovah to His anointed, "and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii. 8). "Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee; . . . all the ends of the earth shall fear Him" (Ps. lxxvii. 3, 7). And in Psalm lxxii. we have a vivid account of how the kings of the earth shall come and do homage to the Lord's Messiah.

The same holds true of the prophets themselves to a still greater degree.

Thus Isaiah writes: "It shall come to pass in the last days" (*i.e.* in the time of the Messiah, for to the Old Testament that is "the last days"), "that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii. 2 *et seq.*). That the entry of the nations into the Church appears to the prophet as a receiving of them into the congregation of the Jewish people, is only a result of the characteristic (Old Testament) point of view, whence he looks at the future of the kingdom of God. The same method of observation also asserts itself in the magnificent chapter where we read: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. lx. 3 *et seq.*). And then the prophet sees the multitudes of the nations come flowing to the Church of God in countless hosts, so that land and sea are swarming with them, like caravans of camels and great flocks (Isa. lx. 6, 7), like clouds of migratory birds (lx. 8), like fleets of the ships of Tarshish from the remotest islands (lx. 9), bringing themselves and all they possess to the Church of God; and at the sight the Church beams for joy with a heart at the self-same time throbbing with anxiety and swelling with love (lx. 5). And in another passage the Lord says, by the same prophet, to His anointed: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (xlix. 6).

Jeremiah says: "O Lord, the Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies" (*i.e.* idol-worship, etc.) (Jer. xvi. 19).

Joel promises that the Lord in the last days shall pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel ii. 28). And although this in a preliminary way was accomplished on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 16 *et seq.*), when the gospel was preached to the devout men (proselytes) out of every nation under heaven (*i.e.* the then known world) that were dwelling at Jerusalem, yet there is no doubt that that was only the beginning of the fulfilment of the prediction whose promise extends through the whole history of the Church, and whose fulfilment conditions its close.

Micah sketches for us the conversion of the Gentiles with somewhat the same expressions as his contemporary, Isaiah: "Many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths" (Mic. iv. 2; *cf.* Isa. ii. 3).

Zephaniah says: "The Lord . . . will famish all the gods of the earth: and men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen" (Zeph. ii. 11).

Zechariah writes: "He (Messiah) shall speak peace unto the heathen: and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zech. ix. 10).

And finally, we have the Lord's glorious words of promise in the last of the prophets: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles, . . . saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. i. 11).

We see, therefore, that the prediction as to the preaching of salvation to the heathen, and their conversion to the true God, runs like a gold thread through the Old Testament prophecy from beginning to end.

In the New Testament we meet the Saviour's own utterances concerning the salvation of the Gentiles, and

these fully accord with the testimonies from the old covenant.

The Saviour's words on the subject are partly promises and partly injunctions. Both are universal, *i.e.* have the whole of humanity as their subject.

On several occasions Jesus gives expression to the thought that His kingdom will embrace all people. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11). This kingdom will be like a grain of mustard seed that grows into a great tree in which the fowls of the air (all the peoples of the earth) will build their nests (Matt. xiii. 31, 32), *i.e.* find a shelter, a spiritual home. The leaven (the gospel) which is placed in the three measures of meal (humanity) will leaven the whole (Matt. xiii. 33). "The field" in which His seed will be sown is not merely the Jewish nation, but the whole world (Matt. xiii. 38, "The field is the world"). And so, too, the reapers (the angels) in the time of harvest will gather His elect from the four corners of the earth, and from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. xxiv. 31, xiii. 39 *et seq.*). They must therefore, at the end of the world, be found everywhere in the world, which again presupposes that the gospel has been preached over the whole earth.

Finally, we have His clear declaration that this preaching of the gospel will take place, and that it stands in a definite relation to the coming of the end. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (*i.e.* that all nations may be afforded an opportunity to choose, to determine for or against Christ and His kingdom); "and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14). Before that takes place it cannot come; for "the gospel must first be published among all nations" (Mark xiii. 10).

To these promises of the Lord correspond His missionary injunctions which also aim at the whole world. Even in the Sermon on the Mount—that great programme of His kingdom—He reminds His disciples that their task is to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (Matt. v. 13, 14). And when He departed from the apostles on the Mount of

Ascension, His last words to them were: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. xxviii. 19 R.V.); "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 8).

This universality of the gospel proclamation also found expression in two strange events, of which the one stands as a sign over His own cradle, the other over that of His Church; we refer to the Magi from the East and the miracle at Pentecost. At His birth the angels sang of "Peace on earth" (not merely in Jewry) "and goodwill to men" (not merely to the Jews), and old Simeon blessed Him, both as the light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Israel (Luke ii. 32). A parallel to this was the homage which the new-born Saviour received from the Wise Men from the East, in whom we naturally see representatives of the heathen world, and a promise that even it would come to acknowledge Him as its Lord and King. And when at Pentecost there were gathered "devout men out of every nation under heaven," and the gospel was heard by them all in their own language, and was accompanied by the sign of tongues of fire (Acts ii.), we are certainly right in seeing here an evidence that the kingdom of God was intended to embrace all people, and that the news of salvation should be proclaimed with tongues of fire in all languages over the whole earth.

The apostles and their co-workers did not overtake the whole world with their testimony, and it even took some time before they properly understood that their task was so comprehensive. Thus Peter did not rightly understand it until the Lord by the vision at Joppa had shown him anew that on nation was in the sight of God unclean, in the sense that it was not meant to be cleansed and sanctified by salvation in Christ (Acts x. 9-16), and had by an example (the conversion of Cornelius) made clear to him what that vision signified (Acts x.; especially vers. 34, 35).

The special Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, seems to have had the clearest perception that his mission was to all nations. He expressly says that he had "received grace and apostle-

ship, for obedience to the faith among all nations" (Rom. i. 5; cf. Acts xiii. 47), and his whole life was consecrated to unceasing effort towards that goal. This work the Church through its missionary activity has continued—with more or less fervour and greater or smaller result—until this day, and will continue until the end of days.

The result of this work will be that the gospel will reach all nations; that the "fulness of the Gentiles" (a great multitude of the heathen) will enter into the kingdom of God (Rom. xi. 25); and that thus in the great multitude before God's throne there will be found saved souls of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Rev. vii. 9).

Of course, we cannot venture to hope that all nations will actually become Christian, still less that all individuals within each nation will be Christians even in name. It will be in the power of the individual people, as in that of the individual person, to reject salvation, since salvation can only be received of free will. What we maintain to be the teaching of Scripture is merely this, that salvation in Christ will be offered to all people before the end comes, that great multitudes from the different nations will be received into the Church, and that many of these in a really saving manner will come to believe, so that the multitude of the saved at last will consist of individuals from all nations and be so great that it may with reason be designated as innumerable.

2. *The Conversion of the Jews*

Strange though it at first sight may seem, yet it is really the case that the Old Testament is less rich in direct utterances regarding the conversion to Christ of the Jews than of the Gentiles. But the explanation of this apparently strange fact is natural enough when one carefully considers the matter, for there are several good reasons why this must almost necessarily be so.

In the first place, it is to be noticed that Israel in the old covenant was the "people of God,"¹ at that time the

¹ See the delightful little book by Professor F. Delitzsch, *Are the Jews God's Chosen People?*

only real kingdom of God on earth. However frail, yea, directly ungodly, and to some extent obdurate, Israel was, yet it was the covenant people and the bearer of the thought of salvation. The work of the prophets was to a considerable degree reformatory. Their books are therefore full of exhortations to repent. They contain also a series of predictions regarding this repentance in the future. But it was quite natural that so long as Israel was not perfectly obdurate and rejected by God, it stood as a people still within the kingdom of God and not outside. The work of the prophets in relation to the Jews, both in exhortation and prediction, was therefore a home missionary and not a foreign missionary work. They speak about the future conversion of Israel, yet they do not regard this as an entrance into a new fellowship (the Christian Church), but as a reformation within their own community. The former might first come to pass when a kingdom of God was formed, apparently on the ruins of the old, and yet in reality as a renovation of it, and Israel had taken up a position outside of it, as actually was the case when they rejected their Messiah. But this position had not yet been taken up when the prophets ceased, nor was it assumed until the Jews crucified the Lord of Glory and mocked the Spirit of the day of Pentecost. And so they could not prophesy from this historic point of view. To them Israel still represented the people of God, to whom the Gentiles, when they repented, should stream. Hence the wealth of promises about the conversion of the Gentiles. No doubt the nation itself was in need of conversion, but the prophets as a rule saw this conversion as an inner reformation in doctrine and life, a return to the broken covenant with their father's God, not as an entrance into a new covenant, a new kingdom of God, a Church of Gentile Christians, which had gathered around the Saviour who had been rejected by Israel.

To this prophetic view of the future must be added, in the next place, other facts which also help to show that in the prophecies of the old covenant we cannot expect any clear promise concerning the conversion of

the Jews to Christianity and their entrance into the Church.

The peculiarity of the original language of the Old Testament helps to give ambiguity to some pertinent predictions, since the same word (Heb. שׁוּב) is used both of conversion and of the return from the Babylonian Captivity, and on that account in some passages it may be doubtful whether the words of promise imply that the Lord will convert Israel or allow it to return¹ (*i.e.* from the Captivity). Yet the connection, as a rule, will show us in what sense the word is to be understood. But it is of much greater importance that in several places it appears to be very uncertain whether the promise refers to the return of the Jews to their own land after the Captivity, or to a subsequent gathering of Israel in the kingdom of God, which consequently still awaits fulfilment. That such an ambiguity arises, however, is very natural, since the Jews in the Babylonian Captivity, and their present dispersion over the different lands, have so much in common that both the condition itself and its cessation might easily blend into one image in the prophetic visions. This indeed is the case with the first and second coming of Christ; and in the eschatological utterances of the Lord (Matt. xxiv. and xxv.), the destruction of Jerusalem and the last judgment also blend together.

There are many such predictions of the restoration or return of Israel which, in the respect indicated, are more or less ambiguous; indeed, there are very few of the pertinent prophecies, which are not in some degree encumbered with such an ambiguity. It is consequently useless to attempt to point out the passages in which this occurs. We must rather approach them all with the consciousness that it is necessary to have this difficulty ever in view, and therefore to avoid feeling too sure that the promises concerning the conversion of the Jews must necessarily imply the entrance of Israel into the Church. It is, on the other hand, the rule that conversion, as already hinted, is looked at by the

¹ The ambiguity of the word may sometimes assume the character of a play upon words, as in Jeremiah iv. 1 (*cf.* Gesen. *Thesaurus*, p. 1372). *Cf.* Isaiah xlix. 6, where the word may be translated *convert* or *restore*.

prophets as a return to the Lord's covenant with the patriarchs,—certainly sometimes designated as a “new covenant” (Jer. xxxi. 31), but yet only in the sense that it will be a radical renewing of and cordial compliance with the old. The prophets in the old covenant do not look upon the new covenant in the messianic age as the institution of a new kingdom of God, outside of which Israel as a people must for some time stand. To their vision, generally, the return of the Jews to their own country and their conversion to the Lord and to their Messiah, blend into one picture, since the spaces between the separate stages in this development are like deep valleys that lie concealed behind the prominent points in the prophetic prospect. Their historical standpoint entailed this. It is therefore first among the New Testament authors, who speak from an altogether different standpoint, that we have any reason to expect, and actually also find, a definite utterance about the conversion of the Jewish people, in the sense of an entrance into the Christian Church.

At the same time, these Old Testament prophecies have not on that account lost their importance in connection with the question which is here engaging our attention. On the contrary, they contain many traces of hope for Israel's future which even yet cannot be said to have found their full and final completion.

By the side of the threats of the prophets regarding grievous punishments to be inflicted on the refractory people there runs a series of promises concerning their future restitution, which is founded on a reference to the faithfulness and grace of the Lord who has chosen Israel to be His peculiar people, and who concluded an everlasting covenant with their fathers. Even such a terrible proclamation of judgment as that in Leviticus xxvi. concludes with the promise that the Lord, when the judgment is over, will remember the covenant of their ancestors, and have mercy upon them (vers. 42–45). Essentially the same thing holds true of the vigorous and far-reaching judgments which are proclaimed in the valedictory song of Moses (Deut. xxxii.). However often and grievously the Lord must punish His

people, He could yet say to them: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, . . . O virgin of Israel" (Jer. xxxi. 3, 4). "How shall I deliver thee, Israel? . . . Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together" (Hos. xi. 8). "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands" (Isa. xlix. 14-16). The Lord chastises His people, but only in order that by the chastisement He may get them back to Himself; He does not cast them off for ever. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer" (Isa. liv. 7, 8). "I will betroth thee unto Me for ever" (Hos. ii. 19). "I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (Isa. lxi. 8, 9). "If those ordinances (the laws of nature) depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 36, 37), *i.e.* just as that is impossible, so will this never come to pass. "Thus saith the Lord God; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee in the days of thy youth (the covenant with the patriarchs), and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant" (Ezek. xvi. 59, 60).

In this already there lies a promise that the hardening of the people shall not last for ever; for then the punishment could never cease and grace enter in its stead.

A conversion there must be in order that God's promise may be fulfilled.

Such a conversion Moses already presupposes; for when he speaks of the evils which will come upon them when they break the covenant with the Lord, he adds: "When thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, . . . then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee" (Deut. xxx. 1-6). This passage is all the more remarkable in that it speaks of a repentance that is to take place after a dispersion which seems to extend much further than the Babylonian Captivity, and suits wonderfully the present state of the Jews.

From the prophets we hear very much more about this conversion. We are told that after all the judgments which will be passed upon the people there will still be a holy remnant left, a remnant that will truly turn to the Lord. "As a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof" (Isa. vi. 13). "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God" (Isa. x. 21).

And this remnant which repents, the Lord will gather again from their dispersion over the whole earth. Very remarkable, in this connection, is the 11th chapter of Isaiah. After the prophet has first described how the "root of Jesse" (Messiah) shall stand as an ensign for the people to which the Gentiles shall seek, he continues: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts

of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa. xi. 11, 12).¹

It is manifest that here there is reference to more than merely the return of Israel from the Captivity in Babylon. That took place long before the advent of Christ, whilst this is to take place after the advent. That captivity was not a dispersion to the lands enumerated, and certainly was not to "the islands of the sea," an expression which designates the whole of the distant and mostly unknown land of the West. Such a dispersion first took place at a much later date. The line of thought seems to be: first the Messiah shall come and establish a kingdom of glory; then the heathen nations shall stream to that kingdom; and finally, even the "remnant of Israel" shall be gathered "from the four corners of the earth,"—exactly as Paul represents in Romans xi. 25, 26. First the "fulness of the Gentiles" shall enter the kingdom of God, and then "all Israel shall be saved."

In Isaiah xlix. 6 the Messiah is set forth as the one who shall both be "a light to the Gentiles" and "restore the preserved of Israel" (or convert them, turn them).

Along with these passages we must also reckon Hosea iii. 4, 5: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king (the Messiah of David's race); and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days."²

Jeremiah writes: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,

¹ For an exhaustive discussion of this question the reader is referred to the commentaries, and especially to Vitringa (*Comm. in libr. proph. Jes.*, Leov. 1724, t. i. pp. 339–57), who, however, sees the first fulfilment of the prophecy in the conversion of the Jews in the apostolic age, and the more distant and more perfect fulfilment in the future conversion of the Jews which is still to take place.

² Many recent authors strongly maintain that the reference here is not to the conversion of Israel, but to their return from the captivity in Babylon. But that which is promised here is to take place "in the latter days," that is, in the Messianic age. Hence such a view is rendered impossible; for the Jews returned from Babylon some 400 years before Christ came. Besides, they did not sincerely turn to the Lord on their return from the Captivity. Idolatry

that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). That Israel will come to call Messiah by this name is certainly a prophecy which still awaits its fulfilment. And then we have the glorious promise (in Jer. xxxi. 31 *et seq.*) of the new covenant which the Lord will conclude with Israel in messianic times. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: . . . I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people."¹

The Prophet Ezekiel, also, is somewhat profuse in predictions about the glorious future of Israel. We need only recall chapter xxxvi., which shows what the Lord will do to His people, not for their sake, but for the sake of His holy name, for which He grieves (xxxvi. 21). In order to sanctify the name, dishonoured by the condition of Israel, He will again assume it, in order that the heathen may see and understand that He is mighty to save His people (xxxvi. 23). Certainly, here there is mainly reference to the deliverance from the Captivity in Babylon, but that the prophet's vision was not confined merely to that is evident enough from this, that the salvation he promises is unmistakably indicated as a spiritual and inward salvation: "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. . . . A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (xxxvi. 24, 26). The latter part of the prophecy is still unfulfilled.

certainly ceased, but only to give place to Pharisaism. And still further, the description of their state before the conversion quite accords with their present state. And so we see in this prophecy a promise of the conversion of the Jews which is still to come. In our day the Jews are both without idolatry and without the Mosaic worship (the old sacrificial services, which can properly only be held at Jerusalem). As a matter of fact, the most of the Jews now are really without religion. Mammon is the only god they worship.

¹ Cf. on those two passages from Jeremiah, Orelli's *Die alttestam. Weissagung*, pp. 373 *et seq.*

And in this prophet there is likewise the great promise about Israel's resurrection from the dead (xxxvii. 1-14). The prophet sees the whole of Israel as a huge valley of the dead covered with dry human bones. But a word from the Lord brings life into them, and they get sinews and flesh and become living mortals, and God breathes His Spirit into them. What this field of bones was the Lord Himself informs us in verse 11: "These bones are the whole house of Israel." Israel is still in such a valley of dry bones, and we longingly await the day when the Spirit of God, through the words of the gospel, shall breathe life into them; for that has hitherto happened only with a very few, not with "the whole house of Israel."¹

Finally, we come to a prophet who lived after the Babylonian Captivity, and whose predictions therefore cannot refer to the Captivity at all. In the well-known passage in Zechariah xii. 10-12 we read: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart." And then in what follows there is described further how each family apart, and each sex apart, shall mourn and lament for the one who has been pierced. It will be a universal mourning of the people, which can only be compared with the mourning over the beloved King Josiah, who fell in the battle in the valley of Megiddo (2 Chron. xxxv. 22-25). The pierced one can only be their Messiah, whom they nailed to the cross. When Jehovah mentions Him, He first says *Me* (for what they do to His only begotten Son they do to Him; cf. John x. 38, xiv. 3-10), and thereafter *Him*, in order to indicate that the pierced one is both different from Him and still one with Him. This applies only to Christ.

¹ In connection with this passage reference may be made to Professor Caspari's *Israels aandelige Opstandelse fra det døde* ("Israel's Spiritual Resurrection from the Dead").

Has this prophecy been fulfilled? Yes, partially. It began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost,¹ when Peter, whose audience consisted mainly of Jews and proselytes (Acts ii. 5–10), concluded his speech concerning the Crucified with the words: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And then it is said, "they were pricked in their heart." That was the first beginning of the fulfilment of this prediction concerning a godly sorrow which "worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Cor. vii. 10). But it was also only a beginning. What the prophet sees is a whole people in mourning at having laid violent hands upon their Messiah. Such a conversion of the people to Christ among the Jews has not yet taken place, and we are therefore entitled to expect it before the end comes, if the words of prophecy are to be believed at all.

Here we leave the Old Testament. Naturally, we have only referred to the most important passages. There are also many others which point in the same direction. We might, for instance, mention Micah ii. 12, v. 6, 7; Zephaniah iii. 12 *et seq.*, etc.

In the New Testament the passages which relate to this subject are not very numerous, but as a compensation they are generally very much clearer than the Old Testament prophecies. Christ had already come, and it became more and more certain that the Jews would reject Him; indeed, in the apostolic age this rejection had already become an accomplished fact. Consequently, from the situation itself it was manifest that the New Testament predictions about the conversion of the Jews had nothing to do with the restoration after the Captivity, and did not refer merely to the change in the mind of the people within the old covenant, which as a matter of fact was now abolished. If there is a suggestion now of a conversion of the people, this can only be a turning to Christ, an entry into the Church and congregation of God.

¹There is already a preliminary hint of the fulfilment of the prediction in Luke xxiii. 48.

Thus we are at once set free from the ambiguity which, in the respect referred to, shrouded so many of the Old Testament utterances on the subject.

From the Saviour Himself we have only two declarations bearing upon this question, viz., Matthew xxiii. 39 and Luke xxi. 24.

In the former passage the Lord says that when He again visibly returns to earth, Israel shall also greet Him with the welcome: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." But they could not so greet the Lord on His return if they had not already acknowledged Him as their Messiah; in other words, turned to Him, been converted. No doubt they had already, shortly before, at His entry into Jerusalem, used the same expression without considering specially what was implied in it (Matt. xxi. 9), but we cannot imagine that such a thoughtless homage will be offered at the Lord's second advent. Then only the actual believers will raise their glad hosannas to greet the Lord, whilst others will wish the mountains to fall on them and the hills to cover them from the sight of Him who sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (Luke xxiii. 30; Rev. vi. 16).

In Luke xxi. 24 the Lord announces that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." By the "times of the Gentiles" must either be understood the time during which the Gentiles would have supremacy over Jerusalem, or the period of time which would be allowed to the Gentiles for their conversion and entrance into the kingdom of God. The former can hardly be the real meaning; for then the words would have a significance quite self-evident and therefore superfluous, and consequently also somewhat meaningless. It is manifest enough that so long as the Gentiles have supremacy over Jerusalem it is they who tread it down, *i.e.* keep it under, in subjection. We must therefore maintain that this is a reference to definite times (seasons) for the entrance of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God. This view is strengthened by the word with which the Saviour expresses the notion of time. He does not use the ordinary word for time (*χρόνος*), but a word (*καιρός*) which designates time according to

its nature as well fitted and convenient (or the reverse) for the acts which are to be done in it.¹ It is the same word which has already been used in reference to Jerusalem's "time of visitation" (Luke xix. 44), and which in the passage under consideration is used of the Gentiles' "times of visitation,"—here in the plural (*times*), because there is a suggestion of a long series of shifting times within which every nation has its time of visitation.

In these times of the Gentiles, Jerusalem shall be "trodden down." Thereby is implied chiefly that the city itself shall be in the power of the Gentiles, which is the case until this day. But since the words Jerusalem and Zion often stand for the people of the Lord under the old covenant who had their sanctuary there, the expression likewise implies that the Jewish people will be, as it were, "down-trodden" (kept under and oppressed) during this period of time. But this oppression will only last until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Thereafter a change in this relation will occur, which may possibly signify that Israel will again have a time of visitation.

In order to understand the passage aright we must pay some attention to the context. Immediately before we have the announcement of the destruction of Jerusalem, and immediately afterwards there is reference to the second advent of the Lord. By the destruction of Jerusalem the preliminary rejection of the Jewish people was sealed. Thereby had its unrecognised and misused time of visitation come to an end. Now began the times of the Gentiles, their entry into the kingdom of God. And during these times the treading down of Jerusalem (the dispersion of the Jews) was to continue. But then the period of time, until the close of which it should continue (its *terminus ad quem*), was also set. When the times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled (*i.e.* when the fulness of the Gentiles has entered into the kingdom of

¹ Regarding the difference between these two words the reader is referred to the well-known works of Grimm and Cremer, and especially to Archbishop Trench's excellent *Synonyms of the New Testament*, 7th ed., pp. 197-200. These two words bear almost the same relation to each other as the English words *time* and *season*.

God, Rom. xi. 25, 26), Israel's spiritual captivity shall also cease. Israel will again have a time of grace, and will not, as formerly, fail to recognise it and abuse it, but will employ it for salvation.—Such practically seems to be the line of thought of the passage.¹ We cannot actually say that it plainly teaches the conversion of Israel; but it assumes that it will come to pass, which in essence amounts to the same thing.

Then we come to the Apostle Paul. Before we pass on to discuss the main argument or proof for our hope for the conversion of the Jews (Rom. xi. 25, 26), let us briefly refer to what the apostle, as it were in passing and presumptively, expresses on the same subject in 2 Corinthians iii. 16. For, in indicating the veil which even in his day still lay upon the Old Testament when it was read by the obdurate Jews, so that they were unable to understand the true substance of the Messianic prophecies, and apply them to Jesus of Nazareth, to whom they in truth pertained, he adds that when "Israel shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." He seems therefore to assume that there will come a time when they will really repent and thereby be enabled to see that Christ was the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament. But yet it must be acknowledged that the expression has something indefinite about it, so that we should not venture to build anything on it if we did not from another and a plainer passage know with certainty that the apostle felt assured that the veil would in reality one day be taken away.²

And finally, we have the passage which always and justly has been regarded as the surest foundation for our hope concerning the final conversion of Israel, namely, Romans xi. 25, 26. "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits;

¹ Whether the dispersion will likewise cease, and the dispersed be gathered to their land again, and there form a Christian Church of their own, is a question which we shall consider later on.

² In the first place, the expression employed in the original text is such that one cannot with certainty discover whether the presumed case was actually expected to come to pass. In the next place, in the MSS. there is also uncertainty as to whether *ἀν* or *ἐάν* should be read,

that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved."

These words have special significance for our question, in that they are not a casual utterance of the apostle, but have their place in the last link of a chain of argument (Rom. ix.—xi.) in which he has set himself the task of showing what is the relation in which Jews and Gentiles stand to salvation. After having expressed his cordial concern for Israel, and his great grief that the chosen people of the promise had rejected salvation (Rom. ix. 1–5), he points out that God's election and promise stand without regard to Israel's relation to Him (ix. 6–13). Now, this election does not depend on any merit of Israel but on God's free grace. Consequently the election gives Israel no claim upon God. From His side all is mercy. He is the Lord and will have mercy on whom He will (ix. 14–29). And so salvation must be a free gift of God, who can grant it to whom He will, Jews or Gentiles. But that was the very point which Israel hitherto had been unwilling to acknowledge. Therefore they remained outside of the new kingdom of God, where this economy of grace in Jesus Christ is proclaimed in the gospel. The Gentiles who believed this message about the free grace of God were received into it, whilst Israel, who would set up a righteousness of their own, remained outside. That, however, was not God's fault; for He held out His arms of grace to them the whole day, but the refractory people would not accept the invitation (ix. 30–x. 21).

But Israel was not thereby rejected for ever. Even now, in the time of their obduracy, there was a remnant left (as in the days of Elijah) who received salvation, whilst the great multitude had closed their hearts to the gracious call of God (Rom. xi. 1–10). And as concerns the others who still stand outside, the apostle could point to at least three consolatory facts which showed that here we have every reason to admire and praise the divine grace and wisdom which can take even a fall into service, and employ it for the furtherance of God's purpose. In the first place, of course, Israel's sad obduracy was a means whereby "salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (xi. 11), since the apostles turned to

them with that gospel which the Jews had scorned. In this way had Israel's fall (obduracy) become "the riches of the world, and the diminishing (the loss Israel has suffered by so few of them participating in Christ's salvation) of them the riches of the Gentiles" (xi. 18). But in the next place, the fact that the Gentiles entered before them into the kingdom of God ought to provoke them to emulation (xi. 11-14), so that they too should turn to the gospel, and that thus these severed branches should be reingrafted in the true vine (xi. 17-24). Finally, the apostle emphasizes this, that when this conversion does take place, Israel will become a great blessing to the whole New Testament kingdom of God. If their fall is the riches of the world, and their diminishing is the riches of the Gentiles, "how much more their fulness" (their complete entrance into the kingdom of God)? (xi. 12). "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" (xi. 15). To this last point, however, we shall return.

It is after such reasoning as this that Paul finally condenses the contents of the whole in the two verses (25, 26) which we are specially interested in, and the contents of which we shall now more closely consider.

The apostle begins by indicating that it is a secret, a "mystery," he is now about to reveal. The substance of this secret embraces the following points.

1. A hardening had taken place in the case of a portion of Israel. Both from the argument we have been considering and from history we know that that was the larger portion, since only a small minority of the Jews received salvation in Christ. The apostle uses, therefore, a mild expression in the circumstances, since his heart was filled with burning love for his nation. That, however, is only, so to speak, the introduction to the secret or mystery.

2. This hardening, which had become the occasion of the news of salvation being so soon proclaimed to the Gentiles, will continue until their "fulness" has entered the kingdom of God. This fulness can only be a full number of converted Gentiles who enter the Church of God. It is not necessary that all the Gentiles should be saved. The gospel will

certainly, before the end comes, be preached in the whole world (Matt. xxiv. 14); and since God's Word will not return void, there will also be a great multitude of converted Gentiles from all nations; and we have already seen from the Revelation that there will be representatives from all these in the great white-robed throng before the throne of the Lamb (Rev. vii. 9).

3. When this has come to pass, then shall the whole of Israel be saved. In the original the words are, "And so all Israel shall be saved," *i.e.* in the way and in the order which has been pointed out in the previous verses; consequently the entry of the fulness of the Gentiles into the Church will precede and condition that salvation of the Jews. The Israel which shall thus be saved can of course only be the real Israel, *i.e.* the Jewish people as a nation; for there has only been reference to the relation of the nation to the Gentiles and to salvation in the whole section comprising chapters ix. to xi. And it is "all Israel" that will then be saved. Since this manifestly is in contrast to the "remnant according to the election of grace," which even in the apostle's time came to believe in the Saviour (xi. 5), it must actually be the mass of the people, in any case a "fulness" of Israel which corresponds to the "fulness of the Gentiles" that has been previously mentioned. In what way and by what means Israel is to be saved we are not here told; but it appears, both from the previous line of thought and from the general teaching of Scripture concerning the terms of salvation in the New Testament age, that it can only be by their believing the gospel, and thus entering into fellowship with the Saviour. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Without doubt the meaning of the passage is that Israel as a people will enter into the Christian Church. This, of course, does not necessarily imply that every individual will become a true Christian. That would be both contrary to the nature of human liberty and to the experience of all time. That the whole people will be saved can therefore here simply

mean that it will be received into God's institution for salvation in the New Testament age, the visible Church. But amongst the multitude who will thus be received into it, there will doubtless, as always, be both hypocrites and true Christians.¹

¹ Although as a rule we have been anxious to refrain from entering upon an exhaustive exegesis, we think it necessary to make an exception in the case of this passage (Rom. xi. 25, 26), and, at any rate, by way of note, to give some exposition of the most disputed points in it. The apostle begins very solemnly, and so at the very outset excites our expectation. "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant," etc. Thus he is wont to introduce what is unexpectedly sprung upon the reader (Rom. i. 13), or what he wishes to be specially taken to heart (2 Cor. i. 8), or what he regards as peculiarly liable to misinterpretation because it cannot be understood apart from the light of revelation (1 Cor. xii. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 13). And this expectation of ours is excited still more by this, that he designates what he will communicate as a secret, a mystery. By "mystery" the apostle understands, according to his use of the expression, not something which will always be hidden,—for then he could not reveal it to us,—but something which absolutely requires a revelation from above in order that it may be properly understood. Such a mystery may either be connected with the kingdom of God (1 Cor. ii. 7, xv. 51; Eph. v. 32) or the kingdom of the devil (2 Thess. ii. 7). As an apostle he is appointed one of the "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1), and as such he will also assist his hearers and readers to know "the mystery of God" (Col. ii. 2). Such secrets were revealed to the apostles by God (Eph. iii. 3; cf. Mark iv. 11) in order that they might be explained to us (Col. iv. 3).

What is the secret contained in the passage under consideration? Evidently not principally this, that a portion—the greater portion—of Israel had hardened their hearts against God's gracious call; for that they certainly saw, and thus they did not need any revelation to make them acquainted with it. Besides, he had already told them that a short time previously (xi. 5, 7). No, the secret which was to be revealed was that this hardening should only last a certain time; and, in addition, that the ending of it depended on the fulness of the Gentiles entering into the kingdom of God; and finally, that when this had taken place, all Israel as a people should then receive salvation.

Since the gathering in of the fulness of the Gentiles is a condition of Israel's conversion as a nation, it becomes of special importance to clearly understand what the expression implies. If we disregard such linguistically impossible explanations as this, that it indicates that the Gentiles should be filled with the Holy Ghost,* we have only two interpretations that are worthy of consideration, since they are both admissible. The word in the original for "fulness" (πληρωμα) may signify that with which one fills a cavity (therefore, filling up), or it may mean a full number, a great multitude. The latter

* So, *e.g.*, Jerome. "He calls it their 'fulness,' not on account of their number, but because they are full of the Lord." (Exposition of this passage, *Oper. Om.* Paris, 1846, t. xi.)

Now, when is this general conversion of the Jews to take place? On this point Scripture only says, as we have already mentioned, that it will take place when the fulness

significance is the more common one in the New Testament. Christ appeared "when the fulness of the time was come" (Gal. iv. 4), *i.e.* when the number of the years of waiting-time appointed by God had been fulfilled. And of His "fulness" (John i. 16), His "fulness of the blessing" (Rom. xv. 29), *i.e.* the great riches of His grace, we have "received grace for grace." There can scarcely be any doubt that it is in this sense (a full number) the word is here used. Certainly it also frequently appears in the sense of "filling up" (Matt. ix. 16; 1 Cor. x. 26), and there are some who would give it this sense here (*e.g.*, Philippi). They look at the matter in this way. Since Israel had not entered into the kingdom of God (their diminishing, Rom. xi. 12) there was, as it were, a space left unfilled in the kingdom. That empty space will now be filled up with the Gentiles. The converted Gentiles will therefore be a filling up, a fulness, of that space. And when so many Gentiles are converted that the vacant place is actually filled up, that the kingdom of God has received full compensation for the loss suffered by the fall, the hardening of Israel, Israel also shall be converted. Against this interpretation the following arguments, in our view, speak decisively:—

1. This interpretation gives a wrong rendering to the expression "their diminishing" or loss (Greek, *ἡττημα*) in verse 12. This diminishing is not a loss which the kingdom of God has suffered through their absence, but a loss which they themselves have suffered by failing to have a part in that kingdom. This is best seen from the parallel expression, "the riches of the Gentiles." That can only be the riches (the riches of grace) which the Gentiles get, and so their (Israel's) diminishing can also only be the loss they have suffered. It is not permissible to give a different sense to the genitive in the two parts of the same parallelism. Here there is no reference whatever to any vacant space in the kingdom of God which needs to be filled up.

2. This interpretation fails of its purpose, and confuses the whole figure it employs. For if the idea is that the Gentiles fill up the vacancy which has arisen through the hardening of Israel, where is Israel itself to get room when it repents and comes to take up its place—the place already occupied, according to this view—in the kingdom of God? Will the same vacancy be filled up twice? Israel's conversion is called its "fulness" (xi. 12), which, therefore, must also mean "filling up"—consequently a double "filling up" of the same empty space!*

3. The interpretation accords badly with history. For if Israel's conversion were to happen as soon as many Gentiles had been converted, so that the vacancy left by Israel's absence had been filled, that conversion should have taken place long ago; for what is the whole Jewish nation in comparison with the many hundreds of thousands of Gentiles who have now entered into the Church?

We must therefore hold that the "fulness of the Gentiles" is the multitude

* To take the word "fulness" in a different sense in each of the two verses (xi. 12, 25), as Weiss does (in the most recent edition of Meyer's *Commentary*), is sheer arbitrariness.

of the Gentiles has entered into the kingdom of God. Before that we cannot expect it. Until that time comes there can only be expected, as hitherto, the gathering into

of the Gentiles from all heathen nations. When the gospel has been preached throughout the whole world (Matt. xxiv. 14), and the majority of the heathen nations have become Christian nations, the "fulness of the Gentiles" will have entered the kingdom of God. In the same way also we regard the "fulness of Israel" in verse 12. It is the majority of the people, Israel as a nation, and it practically corresponds with "all Israel" in verse 26.

Until the fulness of the Gentiles in this sense has entered the Church, Israel will continue in part to be hardened. By this "in part" we understand neither a part of this time (for the idea of time is expressed in the word "until") nor a part of their mind (to a certain degree), but a part of their number, and that the greater part. The apostle himself says that they who at this time do not harden themselves are only a remnant, an election or selection (*λείμμα, ἐκλογή, vide xi. 5, 7*).

But when this period of time arrives "all Israel shall be saved." We have already in the text observed that the words actually run, "So all Israel," etc. With these words, no doubt, many things may be expressed which here are all regarded as moments in the manner in which it comes to pass. The conversion will first take place at the time when the Gentile nations have been converted; it will take place in the order thereby specified (first the Gentiles, then the Jews); it will be conditioned by this; and finally, it will also be occasioned by it. It is, of course, the last of these that Paul is thinking of when he says that he by his labours for the conversion of the Gentiles will arouse his own nation to emulation or jealousy. It is with Israel as with a wife who does not set much value on her own husband before she begins to fear that she may lose him altogether. Then first her affection awakens, and that in the form of jealousy. Israel's proper bridegroom is the Messiah, the Christ. When all the Gentiles gather about Him, then also will the Jews awaken to consciousness of the fact that He first and foremost belongs to them who through the patriarchs have received the promise of Him. Then will they too gather around Him. Consequently the conversion of the Gentiles is a condition that Israel as a nation shall turn to Christ.

When this condition has been fulfilled, then shall all Israel be saved. Now, what is to be understood by "all Israel"? To this question three different answers have been given, viz.—

a. "All Israel" consists of all true Christians, both Jews and Gentiles. It is the gathering of all these that Paul (in Gal. vi. 16) calls "the Israel of God." Since the apostle in the whole section (Rom. ix.—xi.) is speaking of the relation between the real Israel (the Jewish nation) and the Gentile world, this interpretation is of course quite impossible. And it has now been given up by all thoughtful expositors. It belongs to the infancy of biblical exposition, when inquirers had not accustomed themselves to pay special attention to the context and to the whole line of thought in the section under consideration.

b. "All Israel" is the gathering of all Jews, who through the ages enter the Church. These are so called because they compose God's true spiritual Israel, whilst the unbelieving Jews do not deserve the name of Israel at all (Rom.

the Church of individual Jews. These certainly are not so very few in number; for it has been estimated that since the beginning of this century not fewer than 130,000 Jews have

ix. 6-8). This view was very general in former days (even amongst the old Lutheran theologians), but is almost as inadmissible as the preceding. It fails on the following grounds:—

(1) Paul evidently contrasts all Israel with the “remnant” or the “election” (xi. 5, 7), which already in his day accepted the gospel. But this explanation explains away such a contrast and reduces the two to one and the same.

(2) This salvation of all Israel, according to Paul, will first come to pass when the fulness of the Gentiles has already entered into the kingdom of God; but that conversion of occasional single Jews extends through all the history of the Church. If this view were possible, ought there not to have stood in verse 25 the word *whilst* instead of *until*? So, indeed, these expositors have found themselves compelled to translate the passage, in order that it might fit their view. But that is quite contrary to the idiom. The expression in the original means *until* and nothing else.

(3) The whole declaration, according to this view, would be really meaningless. If “all Israel” is only a gathering of all Jews who through the ages have been saved, then would—as Hofmann well remarks—the promise about the salvation of Israel only amount to this, that all Jews who are to be saved will be saved. But such meaninglessness we cannot attribute to a man like Paul, especially when the wording of what he has said gives us not the slightest reason for it.

(4) Then what becomes of the “mystery” which the apostle will reveal to us? That some Jews will become Christians in the course of the centuries cannot be called a mystery at all. But that the hardening of the nation will only last until the fulness of the Gentiles has entered the kingdom of God, and that it shall then cease, lo! that is a thing we could not have imagined if God through the apostle had not revealed it to us. And so it really deserves the name of “secret” or “mystery.”

This whole interpretation is practically of such a nature that Hofmann must be considered to be justified in holding that in our age it would be superfluous to refute it.

c. “All Israel” is the Jews regarded as a nation. The meaning of Paul’s words, therefore, is that Israel shall one day become a Christian nation. But this does not exclude the possibility that some individuals in this nation will still continue to be either Jews or open unbelievers. The Norwegian nation is a Christian nation; but there are many amongst us who openly confess that they believe neither in God nor Christ, and still more, who no doubt profess to be Christians yet in reality deny their Christianity in their hearts and by their deeds. But still Christianity is undoubtedly the prevailing religious principle amongst us. Besides, it may certainly be expected that when the converted Jews have submitted their proud necks to the easy yoke of Christ, they will be more zealous and active Christians than the majority of the easy-going members of the Christian Churches of our age of “little faith.”

This interpretation is the only one that really accords with the text, and

been baptized, and in the last ten years the number of Jews converted annually has increased considerably, as careful statistics prove. But we cannot hope for any conversion of

so nearly all modern expositors have adopted it. And when a man, as, for example, Kliefoth, continues obstinately to hold the second of these views (*b*), then his whole argument and treatment show that he does not speak as an expositor, but as a dogmatist who at any cost will stand up for a view which in former days enjoyed a certain currency within the Lutheran Church. He is compelled to acknowledge that according to this passage there will probably eventually take place "a revival and conversion on a larger scale" than formerly amongst the Jews, although he still maintains that it is the saints from the Old Testament, along with the converted Jews of all times, who compose "all Israel," of whom mention is made (*Eschatologie*, p. 180). But the reasons we have already adduced against this impossible view he is unable in the slightest degree to invalidate. His attempt to prove, by citations from Greek profane authors, that the expression in the original (*πᾶς* without the article) may indicate "a whole Israel" is completely foiled by the fact that the Old Testament in Greek (the Septuagint), on whose idiom and usage the New Testament so essentially rests, repeatedly renders "all Israel" by the very words which Paul here employs (1 Kings xii. 1; 2 Chron. xii. 1), a fact which Kliefoth passes by in silence, because it is fatal to his interpretation.

To us it is so very clear what the "fulness of the Gentiles" and "all Israel" signify, and only can signify, that we must unhesitatingly reject the genially modest vagueness with which, for instance, Origen concludes his consideration of this passage (*Opera*, Paris, 1519, ii. pp. 390 *et seq.*): "What this 'all Israel' that shall be saved is, or what 'the fulness of the Gentiles' is, God and His only begotten Son alone know,—and possibly the friends to whom He says, 'I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you'" (John xv. 15). If this were the case, the matter would still be an unrevealed mystery; but Paul says that he wishes to make known the mystery to them (Rom. xi. 25), and so clearly and plainly has he done this that a great amount of prejudice is needed in order to misunderstand him.

The purpose of his revealing of the mystery was to prevent the Gentile Christians in Rome from being wise in their own conceits. They were probably only too prone to reason thus: The Jews are now rejected for ever, and we Gentile Christians have taken their place. To counteract this, the apostle now shows them that God's plan of salvation is infinitely deeper than their thoughts. It is a plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles which far surpasses their understanding, a plan which is so wise and so rich in grace that he must conclude his unfolding of it with the exclamation, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," etc. (Rom. xi. 33-36). This we must take to heart; for we ourselves are very prone to be opinionative, and that on this very question. What else is it but opinionativeness when we first set up a system with which the conversion of the Jews will not properly fit in, and then seek to explain away the promise about that conversion! We ought to remember that God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isa. lv. 8, 9).

the Jews as a nation until, through missionary enterprise, the message of salvation has reached all the peoples of the earth. How long a period must elapse before that comes to pass we do not know. When it is remembered that even yet, after nearly nineteen centuries, not one-third part of the human race has become Christian, the period when the conversion of the Jews can be looked for may seem to be far enough distant in an interminable future. But there has never been a missionary age like ours. Already some three millions of heathens have become Christians as the result of the missionary activity of our century, and we still stand only on the threshold of modern missions. The number of baptisms in the mission field increases every year; and throughout Christendom—especially in Great Britain and America—the interest in missions is greatly developing, and the problem is how to send out the forces required, the workers demanded, to conquer the world for Christ. Besides, multitudes of native Christians are taking an active share in the work, and that in ever-increasing numbers. Who knows? The fulness of the Gentiles may be gathered in more quickly than we anticipate.

That, however, would only be the point of time before which the conversion of Israel cannot take place. But within what period will the conversion be completed? Scripture gives us no definite information here. Yet—as we have previously pointed out—it seems to follow from Revelation vii. that it will already be an accomplished fact before Antichrist appears. It seems also a natural inference from this that we can with difficulty imagine the opposition to the kingdom of God attaining the high development which meets us in the time of Antichrist, before that kingdom has completed its development, so that it stands as a united kingdom of God consisting of Jew and Gentile Christians. And finally, as we shall soon see, the conversion of the Jews will have a quickening reflex action on the Church, and there is not in Paul's writings any hint that this is first to come to pass after the appearance of Antichrist; on the contrary, it seems as if it were to follow immediately on the conversion of the Gentile world. It is by these two great

events together that the kingdom of God will attain the necessary maturity before it enters upon the conflicts of the time of Antichrist. And since immediately before the appearing of Antichrist there will come a "falling away" (2 Thess. ii. 3), we must suppose that some interval will elapse between the conversion of the Jews and the anti-christian age.

It would certainly be a different matter if by "life from the dead" (Rom. xi. 15) we understood the resurrection; for if that were the "first resurrection," the conversion of the Jews must extend right into the time of Antichrist; and if it were the last, the general resurrection, it must take place in the millennial kingdom. This latter view some actually have adopted, but there is not in Scripture the slightest warrant for such a view. However, that the expression "life from the dead" cannot mean the resurrection, we shall, in what follows, try to show.

The next question which must be answered is, Why must the fulness of the Gentiles have entered the kingdom of God before Israel as a people enters the Church? This cannot be accidental; there must be some inner connection between these two to bring about those events in this order.

Paul hints at this reason in Romans xi. 11, 13, 14. Even with special regard to the Jews he magnifies his office as the Apostle of the Gentiles, since he by his work for the conversion of the Gentiles hopes to provoke the Jews to emulation, so that they also may receive salvation. No doubt this held true mainly of the individuals who, even in his day, might be expected to repent (the remnant not yet blinded, Rom. xi. 5, 7). But if the partial conversion of the Gentiles could be expected to exercise such an influence on individuals, it seems naturally to follow that the complete conversion of the Gentiles will one day exercise a similar influence on "all Israel."

But there is still something else to be remembered. Even in Genesis xlix. 10 it is said of the Messiah that unto Him shall the gathering or obedience of the people be, and in many prophetic passages the promise is repeated, that

Messiah shall have dominion over all peoples (*e.g.*, Ps. ii. 8, lxxii. 8; Isa. ii. 4; Zech. ix. 10). Now, when the Jews see that this is coming to fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth, when all the nations are greeting Him as their Saviour and King, that must certainly be to them a strong proof that He, after all, must be the promised Messiah. How could another possibly be the Messiah when He has already subdued all the nations of the world which the Messiah was to subdue? The matter is very different at the present day, since there are still so many other religions whose adherents can be counted by millions. Buddhism, for instance, has as many adherents as Christianity, and the Jew can excuse his unbelief by insisting that he does not see why Buddha might not just as well be the Messiah as Jesus of Nazareth. But when all the tribes of the heathen—or, at any rate, the majority of them—have acknowledged Christ, this objection will fall to the ground. The Jewish people will then realize its solitary and forsaken position, that it stands alone in its refusal to do homage to the Saviour. This cannot fail to have its effect. We can thus well understand why the conversion of the Gentiles may occasion the conversion of the Jews.

And what position will the converted Israel now come to occupy?

There are many who believe that the converted Jews will return to their own land, there establish a new kingdom of God, and rebuild the temple; and some have even supposed that they will eventually re-establish a kind of Mosaic service or worship, with this difference from the old, that the sacrifices will only be emblems of the sacrifice already offered by Christ.¹ Jerusalem would thus become the capital of Christendom, and the Jews the central and most influential nation in it. But concerning all this, Paul says never a word. It may be true that the Old Testament passages predicting the conversion of Israel almost always place this in connection with the return of the Jews to their own land, and as a rule also with the revived worship of Jehovah. But this is perhaps only to be regarded as a result of their Old

¹ Auberlen's *Die Theosophie Otingers*, p. 607.

Testament standpoint; consequently Paul, who sees the matter from the clearer New Testament standpoint, disregards it altogether, and only announces that all Israel shall be saved, which, in accordance with his usage, signifies that Israel will participate in the salvation in Christ and be gathered into His Church. Of any special position in this Church, or of the establishment of a special community within it, there is no mention. It therefore is scarcely a manifestation of the spirit of Paul to be anxious, as some converted Jews (like the famous Rabinowitz) have been, to set up a Christian community of their own with a specially Jewish character. Just as little can we agree with Kliefoth (*Eschatologie*, pp. 190, 191), when he takes for granted that all these prophecies concerning the return of the Jews to their own land, etc., will have their fulfilment on the new earth (after the resurrection), since Israel will then occupy a position of importance among the nations, an idea to which we shall devote a little attention later on.

Since the Old Testament predictions so emphatically connect the conversion of Israel to the Lord with their gathering together in their own land, we do not wish positively to deny that these may be literally fulfilled, and that the return is implied in the promise, and is not merely occasioned by the form in which the prophecy appears on account of the prophet's standpoint. It certainly may be regarded so that the prediction will be literally fulfilled by Israel's actual return to Palestine. There are, undeniably,—quite apart from these prophecies,—several indications which seem to favour such a return. If Israel as a people once enters the Church, becomes a Christian nation, it is difficult to imagine how this can happen unless the Jews likewise possess their own country. Paul certainly refers to them not as a number of individuals who will repent, but as a united people ("all Israel") who will participate in salvation. How is this to be effected if they still remain, as now, scattered over the whole earth? It will certainly be very difficult to conceive how there could be a contemporaneous movement towards Christ amongst all the scattered members of the Jewish race in every part of the world. It would be

different if they were already gathered together and occupied their own land. The remarkable tenacity with which, during all their dispersion, they have preserved their national characteristics seems to indicate that they are destined once again to appear as a united people on the stage of history. They have been as a stream whose waters will not mingle with the sea into which it flows. They have not mingled with, have not become absorbed in, the ocean of the other nations of the world. The charge of the anti-Semites against them has been that they never in reality become citizens of the State in which they live, but always regard themselves as foreigners there. Why could they not mingle with the nations on this wide earth if they were only intended as individuals to be gathered into the kingdom of God? It may possibly be answered, Well, that is due to the fact that they regard the land of Canaan as their own, and believe that they will yet have their great world-work to do under their Messiah's dominion. Quite right; but why have no tribulations and persecutions succeeded in depriving them of this faith? Well, it is tenacious fancy that has kept them up, you will perhaps say. No; their expectation of a Messiah is not a fancy; it has its good grounds in the Prophets;—only, it has taken a wrong turn, it has turned to a coming Messiah instead of to one who has already come, and has received many a carnal addition, many false anticipations of an earthly dominion of the world under the Messiah. But the fundamental idea itself is true, and it is that which has kept up their courage and held them together as a nation. May not the purpose of God then be this, that they as a nation will one day find their Messiah, and as a people have a task to accomplish in the service of His kingdom?

And if the Jews are one day again to be gathered together into their own land, that land can only be Canaan, the land of their fathers, the land of promise, which was given them by God as an inheritance and a possession. It is also worthy of attention that Israel never until this day has possessed that land to the extent and with the boundaries promised to Abraham in Genesis xv. 18, "Unto

thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Israel never reached so far with its conquests, even in the golden age of David and of Solomon. Phœnicians, Philistines, Edomites, Syrians, and other races have always been in possession of some part of the country that was promised to Israel.¹ The actual boundary never did coincide with the ideal one. Here, then, possibly is a prophecy which yet awaits its fulfilment. If Israel entered into complete possession of all that land which was promised to Abraham, there would be abundant room for the seven or eight millions of Jews in the world, and for many more.

It is perhaps natural to suppose that Israel may first return to its country and then be converted to Christianity. Then it would be easier to understand how it could be an actual national conversion and how a Christian nation could be formed out of Israel. But against this it must be confessed are nearly all the promises about Israel's return to its own land; they represent this return as a result of its conversion, not as a condition of or presupposition for it. But it might be supposed that here there is reference to a double conversion; one to their father's God, and one to Christ, both of which in Old Testament prophecy, in the nature of the case, must blend together. At present great numbers of the Jews in European countries have so little religion that they do not trouble themselves much either about Jehovah or about Messiah, but only about money. The result of this, then, is, that they think very little about the Holy Land. But if there arose a vigorous religious revival among them as Jews (a Jewish conversion), there would certainly also arise a longing for the land of promise, a great desire to return to it. And when they were assembled in that land, the memories of former days would revive in the people, and the renewed study of the Prophets under the influence of God's calling Spirit might lead them to Christ, especially when they saw that all nations had already gathered themselves around Him: a subject on which we have already touched. Thus a national

¹ Cf. Raumer's *Palästina*, pp. 28, 29.

Jewish revival, which was evidently anticipated by many of the old prophets, might be the occasion of the return of the Jews to their own land, whilst this in turn might bring about their conversion to Christ, of which Paul is speaking in the Epistle to the Romans.

That this will eventually happen we do not venture to say positively. There may appear to be in our own day some indications pointing in the direction of the return of the Jews to their own land. Palestine is greatly under-populated, and seems to await the coming of an active and powerful nation to take possession of a country which is so beautiful and fruitful by nature. The power (Turkey) which rules or misrules it has long ago lost its vital energy, and is hastening to its dissolution. At the same time, attempts are being made to expel the Jews from their old haunts in Europe. The anti-Semites are in vigorous conflict with them in Germany; in Austria the ruling powers seem determined to crush the influence which the Jews have obtained; and in Russia, where there are probably more than two millions of them, unmerciful attempts to banish them have been made. May not this have the result that large numbers of them will desire to return to their own land, Judea? That indeed might be a preparation for a gathering of them there, and these Jews in turn would attract others, especially those in whose hearts a religious longing had been aroused. And if there was a Jewish State in Palestine, more and more Jews would gradually flock thither. And when the Jews had been gathered together, and missions to the heathen had already practically completed their work (the fulness of the Gentiles having entered in), the conversion of Israel to Christ, about which Paul speaks, would take place.

On the other hand, the objection might be raised that if the Jews, before they had yet become Christians, were gathered once more in Canaan as an independent nation, that would probably harden the Jews still more in their Judaism.

A very practical obstacle to the return of the Jews to Canaan has hitherto been the fact that they have such a fondness for commercial life and so little interest in agriculture, which in Palestine would require to be the staple

industry. But such was by no means the case in the time of the old covenant. Then they supported themselves by the produce of their fields and their cattle. This shows that their present tendency in the direction indicated cannot be something characteristic of them as a people, but is only a result of the life they have been compelled for centuries to lead. If, therefore, they returned to their own land, and the old theocratic spirit were again aroused to life in them, it is very possible that the Jews would throw the same energy into agriculture that they now devote to mercantile pursuits.

However, in spite of these considerations, and in spite of many Old Testament prophecies which distinctly point in this direction, if they are to be interpreted literally, we do not venture more decidedly to support the view that Israel shall be gathered, not merely into the Church, but also back again to their own land; and our reasons are these:—

1. The spiritual restoration of Israel, to the vision of an Old Testament prophet, must have appeared as a renewal of the old covenant in the very land of the covenant people. That is so natural, and so much in harmony with the character of the prophetic view on the whole, that the prophets could scarcely have expressed themselves differently. But this very fact must make us cautious. In interpreting such predictions of the restoration of Israel, we must endeavour to read from them what God put in them, not necessarily what the prophet saw and seems to imply in them.

2. Only the spiritual restoration of Israel has received a New Testament sealing (Rom. xi. 26), whilst the prophetic utterances about the return of the Jews to their own land are passed by in silence by the Apostle Paul. Does this not prove that the apostle has regarded this spiritual restoration as the real substance of those predictions, and has looked upon the rest only as an Old Testament way of stating the same thing?

3. If the predictions about the return of the Jews to their own land are to be taken literally, it is necessary to go even further; indeed, so far as to enter into distinct conflict with the New Testament. The fact is, as we have already

indicated, that some of the predictions which speak about this return of Israel to its own land place it in connection with the restoration of the Mosaic divine worship (*e.g.*, Ezek. xl.-xlviii.; Zech. xiv. 16). But to suppose that this is to happen in the New Testament age distinctly conflicts with God's clear words in the New Testament (*vide, e.g.*, Gal. iv. 9-11, v. 4; Col. ii. 16, 17; Heb. vii. 12-18, viii. 7-13, ix. 1-14).¹ Indeed, some of the promises that are connected with declarations regarding the spiritual restoration of Israel go still further, so far, indeed, that they can never be fulfilled on earth if they are to be regarded literally. It is manifest that these prophecies let reflections from the kingdom of glory cast their beams upon the renewed Israel (Hos. ii. 20; Mic. v. 4-10; Isa. xi. 6-8, lxv. 25; Amos ix. 13; Ezek. xxxiv. 25-31).

It will therefore be impossible thoroughly, and with perfect consistency, to carry out a literal interpretation of such passages without coming into conflict with other and clearer expressions of God's Word. Yet, it must, on the other hand, be admitted that the very plainest and most definite declarations that Israel will have that land for a perpetual possession (*e.g.*, Deut. i. 8; Amos. ix. 14, 15) do not place this in any connection with those previously indicated passages, where a literal interpretation, for the reasons stated, is impossible. Especially remarkable is the passage from the prophet Amos (ix. 15), which expressly says, that when Israel again comes into possession of their own land it shall never more be lost. It seems difficult to understand this otherwise than as referring to a still future repossession of it; for, although they did obtain it once more after the Babylonian Captivity, they again lost it within a comparatively short space of time, when it was conquered by the Romans. The indefeasible possession of it must therefore be considered to be a hitherto unfulfilled promise.

For the reason just mentioned, even such an erudite and sensible expositor as Oehler believed that he must maintain (in

¹It would then imply that these utterances had their fulfilment in a conversion to Jehovah which preceded their conversion to Christ, as previously hinted at.

opposition to the views of many other capable commentators) that the promise about Israel's possession of the Promised Land is an essential and enduring feature in the Old Testament prophecies.¹

Our final conclusion is, therefore, that we dare not say anything definite on this point. There are, as we have tried to show, strong but scarcely conclusive reasons both for and against the supposition that Israel will again be assembled in Palestine; and when the prophecies and probabilities are compared, we are inclined to believe that that which is in favour of the supposition is just as weighty as that which can be adduced against it. But we do not venture to say, with Luthardt, that the one who denies the return of Israel does violence to the Scriptures.²

In close connection with this question there is another one: What reflex influence will converted Israel exercise on Christianity at large?

Paul says that their "receiving" (*i.e.* the result of it) will be "life from the dead" (Rom. xi. 15). What does this mean? In the Early Church this expression was understood to refer to the resurrection from the dead, and most modern writers agree in this respect with the ancient. They suppose the sense to be that when Israel has been converted the resurrection of the dead will immediately follow. When the kingdom of God has attained its full development, what can then be looked for except the kingdom of glory which certainly begins with the resurrection! But these objections may be urged:—

(a) The resurrection is never elsewhere in the New Testament designated thus. It is called either simply "the resurrection" (Matt. xxii. 23; Luke xx. 27; 2 Tim. ii. 18, and many other passages) or "the resurrection of the dead" (Matt. xxii. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 12, and frequently), or finally, "the resurrection from the dead" (Luke xx. 35; Acts iv. 2, and elsewhere). If the special character of it is to be further specified, there is mention of "the resurrection of the just" (Luke xiv. 14), "the resurrection of life," or "the

¹ Oehler, *Theologie d. alt. Test.*, sec. 23, note 3.

² Luthardt, *Die letzten Dinge*, p. 72.

resurrection of damnation" (John v. 29). Why should Paul use here an unusual expression if he really referred to the resurrection?

(b) This view does not accord with the future of the history of salvation on the whole. There is, for instance, as has been formerly hinted, no room for the conversion of the Jews immediately before the resurrection. Before the first resurrection there is the age of Antichrist, with its grievous convulsions and conflicts, when the Church under terrible persecutions can only by flight and a life in the wilderness save itself whilst Antichrist wields the supremacy. Is that a time for the conversion of the Jews? And if the second resurrection is intended, then the conversion of the Jews must take place towards the close of the age of the millennial kingdom. But according to the Revelation (vii. 4-8), there was already a full Church number (12,000) sealed "of all the tribes of the children of Israel" before the age of Antichrist arrived. And so the conversion of the Jews must take place earlier, a considerable time, indeed, before "the first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 4, 5) with which the time of Antichrist closes and the millennial kingdom begins. There is, consequently, no room for the conversion of Jews either immediately before the first or before the second resurrection.

(c) This view does not suit the connection in Romans ix. 12-15. The apostle is seeking to show that the hardening of Israel has been the means of great spiritual blessing to the world (the spread of the gospel among the heathen), and he draws the conclusion that their "receiving" (entrance into the kingdom of God, the Church) must effect a greater blessing still. This is manifestly the thought in both verses 12 and 15. If there is to be a proper correspondence here, there must be reference to the same kind of blessing in the two parallels. Since their hardening has occasioned a spiritual blessing, this must also be the sort of blessing which their receiving effects; must be of the same kind, only so much richer. But then the expression cannot thus have any reference to the resurrection of the dead; for that would be a blessing of an altogether different kind.

There have also been those who supposed that "life from

the dead" was a spiritual quickening of the Jewish people itself. (The dead bones revive, Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14.) But this conflicts with the context. Here there is reference, evidently, to something which the conversion of the Jews will accomplish to the advantage of all Christendom.

We therefore agree with the expositors of ancient and modern times, who in these two verses find expressed the thought that the conversion of the Jews will bring upon the Church a rich spiritual blessing.¹

But in what will this spiritual blessing consist? Not necessarily in this, that the converted Israelites themselves will directly bestow upon the Church a wealth of blessing. It may well be supposed that they will only indirectly occasion it. The simile of the hardening seems rather to indicate this; for that did not directly confer any blessing on the Gentiles, but was a condition of and an occasion for such a blessing. Even the mere vision of the conversion of Israel must have a quickening effect upon the Church. We need only consider how the reports about the conversion of the heathen have had a quickening and faith-strengthening influence upon the Christian Churches at home. How much greater then must the effect be when the old covenant people, hardened through long centuries, turns to the Lord! What jubilation there will be then throughout Christendom, what overflowing joy! And how greatly faith, both in the truth of God's Word and the power of grace, will grow with the knowledge that the Lord at last has overcome even this pertinacious resistance, and redeemed all His promises! And what a grandly blazing torch for Christian brotherly love will there be in the consciousness that the two brothers who so long have stood in a relation of such opposition to each other, now at last stand together at the Cross of the Saviour, united by Him who "hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition" (Eph. ii. 14-18). Now for the first time is the kingdom of God complete, a spiritual unity,—and unity is strength.

But yet we cannot remain standing here. It is certainly

¹ So especially Philippi and Godet in their commentaries on those passages (*cf.* the latter, ii. pp. 310, 311); and so also Professor Bugge and many others.

indubitable that converted Israel will bring to the Church a great dower of spiritual forces. It would reveal great ignorance of Israel's vast endowments, glowing enthusiasm, and intense perseverance in pursuing its purposes, if one were to doubt this. If all the tremendous energy that Jews now employ in amassing colossal fortunes were directed to practical Christian work, how much would thereby be accomplished in the way of building up the Church of Christ! And the powers this people possess in scientific directions are attested by the number of Jewish scientists who have made great names for themselves in our own day. They must be able to accomplish something also for the blessing of the Church when their rich intellect has been fertilized by the Spirit of God. What a blessing have the converted Jews already been to the Church! We need only think of men like Neander and Caspari in our own century. Especially may we venture to hope that the Old Testament, which is now misunderstood and torn to pieces by an unbelieving criticism that is foreign to its spirit, will then have new light thrown upon it both by what is happening to Israel and by the aid the sons of regenerate Israel will be able to render in solving its riddles. When the children of the old covenant are united with those of the new, then, perhaps for the first time, will the inner unity of both Testaments and both the covenant books appear in the proper light. Certainly from redeemed Israel much life and light will radiate throughout Christendom, and we shall then see a new fulfilment of the prophet's words: "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. ii. 3).

Our view of this relation of Israel and the nations to salvation and the plan of salvation, is not without practical importance for our efforts for the conversion of both of them to the Lord (the missions to the Jews and to the heathen). We acknowledge that it is the duty of the Christian to pray and work for the development and growth of the kingdom of God ("Thy kingdom come"), quite apart from whether he knows or does not know the plan and purpose of this development; for missionary enterprise is chiefly a fruit

of the love (to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbours) resulting from faith, and of obedience to the Lord's behests. But yet, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that where the Lord in His Word gives us the opportunity of seeing into His plan of salvation concerning the nations, this opportunity must be employed with fidelity; and where this is done it will certainly not be without blessed fruit. It will assuredly first and foremost attune our hearts to praise and gratitude, to admiration of God's wonderful wisdom, which will cause us to exclaim like Paul, when he was meditating on this plan of salvation: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out" (Rom. ix. 33). And in the next place, it will give us greater courage and gladness in our work for the kingdom of God. It quickens the steps of the weary pilgrim to see the goal in the distance, and it gives him much greater certainty and confidence when he knows all the road he must traverse. He does not begin to doubt, if the road should occasionally be crooked or even seem to turn in a direction leading away from the goal, when he knows quite well that he is really following the road which will eventually lead him to his destination. The efforts put forth for the salvation of Israel especially will require such encouragement; for it seems often to have so very little result. But this does not trouble us when we know that that which now, according to Scripture, can be attained is only the saving of some individuals and the preparing for the time when "all Israel shall be saved." We can then, despite every opposition, pray and work with hope, which is a necessary condition if we are to labour with the proper courage and joy.

And what significance the proper understanding of God's plan of salvation has for our view of the relation between missions to the Jews and to the heathen! For if it is the case that the conversion of the heathen and of the Jews is an essential condition of the close of the earthly career of the Church, and if the conversion of the Jews is conditioned by the fact that the "fulness of the Gentiles" is first to enter into the kingdom of God, then will every

mission to the heathen be indirectly a Jewish mission also, since it labours to bring about the necessary condition for the conversion of Israel as a nation, whilst both together become a preparation for the coming of the kingdom of glory. Conversely, the conversion of the Jews will be beneficial to the Church formed by missions to the heathen; for when the "dead bones" of Israel receive life (Ezek. xxxvii. 1-4), this will become so great a blessing to the Church that it may be called "life from the dead" (Rom. xi. 15).

The objection may be raised to what we have set forth, that it opens up a vista in the future of God's kingdom which is irreconcilable with the utterances of Scripture regarding the early advent of Christ, at least as a sudden and unexpected advent. It may be said: Even yet, after nearly 1900 years, more than two-thirds of the human race are still heathen, and of the Jews comparatively few have been converted to Christianity. Now if both the Jews and the heathen are to be converted before the end comes, the end must be relegated to a very far-distant future indeed. Can this be reconciled with Scripture? Does not the Lord Himself say in the Revelation (xxii. 20): "Surely I come quickly"? Does not the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews already call his own age "these last days"? (Heb. i. 2). Does not Paul himself say to his readers, "They are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come"? (1 Cor. x. 11). And John writes: "Little children, it is the last time" (1 John ii. 18). And the day of the Lord is to come "as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. iii. 10), "at an hour when ye think not" (Luke xii. 30). Then how can there be such a long preparation for it as has been suggested in what we have said?

To this we answer—

1. It is true the Lord will come "quickly," but His "quickly" is not the same as ours. A thousand years is a long period to us, but in His sight "a thousand years . . . are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in

the night" (Ps. xc. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 8). That this "quickly" does not mean a short period according to human calculation we can also see from this, that already 1800 years have elapsed since it was uttered, and the Lord has not yet come back. The Lord will come quickly; for the waiting time is brief, according to the standard of God and eternity. And He will come as quickly as is compatible with His plan of first proffering salvation to all. The reason that He tarries is not unwillingness to redeem His promises, but mercy towards those to whom the promise is given, in order that the fulfilment of it may be a blessing to as many as possible. Significant in this respect is 2 Peter iii. 8, 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise" (does not prolong the time without reason and purpose); "but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Here we have the reason why the conversion of the heathen and of the Jews must precede His advent.

2. The expressions "the last time," "the latter days," "the time of the end," etc., in Scripture, and especially in the Old Testament, indicate generally the New Testament age—the time of the Messiah in contrast to the age of the old covenant (*vide* Isa. ii. 2; Jer. xxx. 24, xlviii. 47; Hos. iii. 5; Mic. iv. 1; 1 Cor. x. 11; Heb. i. 2). The New Testament writers imply by such expressions a period which to them was future, by this future period designating especially the age of Antichrist (so, *e.g.*, 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 3; Jude 18). Of course, these expressions prove nothing against the view we have been endeavouring to establish.

3. Finally, it is certainly the case that the Lord will come suddenly and unexpectedly; but that is no reason why His coming may not lie far away in the future, and be prepared through many stages of development in God's kingdom. The day of the Lord will no doubt come suddenly when it does come, even if it has been long prepared for, and to hardened sinners it will always come unexpectedly, however long the Lord tarries. At the coming of the Lord it will be as in the days of Noah (Matt. xxiv. 38, 39).

Although the Lord a long time previously had given warning of what was to happen, yet the unbelieving were surprised when the judgment fell. We therefore cannot see that the expressions of Scripture regarding the sudden coming of the day of the Lord, when the time for it has arrived, in any way conflict with the fact that there is still much to happen before it does come.

NOTE.

We shall, in conclusion, shortly state what the view of the promises regarding the conversion of the Gentiles and the Jews has been in the different periods of the Church.

1. Regarding the conversion of the Gentiles there has not been very much controversy in recent times, since, at least among the leading men of the Church, there has generally been agreement about the mission-command, the missionary promise, and the significance of missions for the history of the development of the kingdom of God. But this has not always been so.

In the apostolic age, Christians vividly recognized that their task was to christianize the whole world, and the promise led them to expect that that goal would be attained. Even in the Ancient Church the standpoint was the same, and work towards that goal was earnest and vigorous. The Church of the Middle Ages, uncertain as it on the whole was, yet maintained this thought and laboured for its realization in its own way, often enough with fire and sword, until its work in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries gradually ceased.

In the Reformation age there seems unfortunately to have been a lack of proper assurance of the firm ground for the conversion of the heathen in the Word of God and of its important bearing on the future of the Church; for when we find little trace of missionary interest even within the circle of the men of the Reformation, the reason was doubtless, to some extent, that they had so much to do with the internal condition of the Church, and that the countries of the Reformation at that time had not yet come into special connection with the heathen world; for it must be remembered that at that time it was the Catholic powers, Spain and Portugal, that ruled the sea, and thereby came into closest connection with heathen lands. But that was not the only reason. The real, the main reason was that the Reformers and their contemporaries had no eye for the significance of the conversion of the heathen for the future of the kingdom of God. This again was due to the fact that they altogether misunderstood the doctrine of "the last things." To them the pope was Antichrist, and the last day was close at hand. It is clear enough that, holding this view, they had no place for any future mission to the heathen. They assumed, of course, that the Church had practically reached the extent it was to have upon this earth, and that the conversion of the heathen was already at an end.*

* *Vide* hereon especially Warneck, *Abriß einer Geschichte der protestantischen Mission*, pp. 12, 13, and 136, 137.

This was a serious misfortune for the Lutheran Church in the post-Reformation age; for such a false view transmitted itself further, and became the prevailing one amongst our Lutheran theologians for nearly 200 years, until those men of God, Spener and Francke, both displayed a clearer view of the future of God's kingdom, and—in accordance therewith—also began to labour for the conversion of the heathen, a work which shortly afterwards was taken up by the United Brethren, and has since been continued by them with undeviating fidelity till the present day.

In the Reformed Church matters were little better either in respect to their view of the future or to their efforts to gather the heathen into the kingdom of God. It was, in reality, only about a century ago that Protestant Christendom began to realise that there was a heathen world which, according to the Word of God, should and must be converted before the Lord returns. Modern missionary enterprise is exactly 100 years old, and it is worth remarking that, contemporaneously with that work, men began first in earnest to devote attention to the future of the kingdom of God (the doctrine of "the last things"). Amongst the orthodox theologians of our age there has only been one eccentric character (*i.e.* Beck of Tübingen) who has denied that the conversion of the heathen is an absolutely necessary link in the future history of the Church, and therefore held that missionary enterprise has not full scriptural warrant.

The Catholic Church has, so far as we know, always theoretically maintained this standpoint, and since the Reformation it has also striven earnestly enough—although often in an improper way—to conquer the heathen world for Christ.

2. The question of a general conversion of Israel has, on the other hand, very frequently been the subject of controversy in the Church. So far as we have been able to gather, from the sources of information open to us, the state of matters has been this—

(a) In the old Eastern Church the majority of the Fathers held the opinion that such a conversion would one day take place; still, for instance, Origen and Chrysostom were very undecided, since in some passages of their writings they seem to speak in favour of a conversion of Israel, and in others against it,—the latter view being more distinct than the former.

(b) The same indefiniteness we also find in Jerome, who, in a sense, belongs both to the East and the West. In his exposition of Romans xi. 25, 26, he says: "When the fulness of the Gentiles comes to believe in Christ, the remnant of the Jews also, moved by zeal and emulation, will believe in Him and be saved." But in his Commentary on Isaiah he rejects this view, and thinks that that passage in the Romans has already been fulfilled by the conversion of the Jews which took place in the time of the apostles.

It is somewhat similar with Augustine. In one of his letters (No. 59 in the Frankfurt edition of 1568), where he discusses his doctrine of Predestination, he holds that the expression "all Israel" refers to all those of the Jews and the Gentiles who are called according to the purpose of God, and he points to the similar phrase, "the Israel of God," in Galatians vi. 16. But on the other hand, at the close of the *opus magnum* of his life, a work completed only a few years before his death, he expresses himself—as Dionysius Alexandrinus and Theodoret had done—in favour of the view that the Lord, before He comes to judgment, will send to the Jews Elijah, who will expound the prophets to them spiritually, and thus lead them to Christ. That he founds partly on the fact

that Elijah had been translated alive to heaven, and therefore is still living, partly, and that chiefly, on Malachi iv. 6, which he renders thus: "He (Elijah) shall turn the heart of the father to the son and the heart of man to his neighbour,"—and he regards this neighbour as Christ (*De Civit. Dei*, xx. 29).

(c) After Augustine it seems to have been universal in the Church to assume a future general conversion of the Jews, partly with, partly without, the expectation that Elijah (or perhaps Enoch also, or even both of them) would assist in bringing it about. Already Augustine's rather older contemporaries in the West, Ambrose and Hilary of Poitiers, assumed this, and all through the Middle Ages this view was so universal that Thomas Aquinas, the greatest and the most orthodox theologian of that period, in his exposition of Romans xi. 25, 26 (*Opera Om.*, Parmæ 1862, t. xiii. pp. 115 *et seq.*), does not hesitate to adopt it. He regards the passage almost as we do, but he does not venture to determine whether "the fulness of the Gentiles" means "their spiritual riches" or "the multitude of them converted to God," and he understands the expression "life from the dead" (xi. 15) as applying to the resurrection. The plan of salvation for the Jews and Gentiles he unfolds rightly enough, and in connection with the exhortation not to be self-wise, he refers very appropriately to Isaiah v. 21. On that standpoint the Roman Catholic Church has remained till the present day.

(d) The Reformers took up a somewhat different attitude towards the question.

Calvin, in his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, explains—as Theodoret had formerly done—"all Israel" as referring to all the Church of God, consisting of Jews and Gentiles (the Israel of God, in Gal. vi. 16), and twists the wording of the passage unsparingly in order to get it to fit in with this view. His younger contemporary and colleague, Beza, however, in his exposition of the passage (*vide his Annotations*), helped to give the words of the text their due, and regarded "all Israel" as the whole Jewish nation. And him the Reformed Church has mostly followed until the present day, if we except some rationalistic Arminians, as, for instance, Hugo Grotius.

Luther, towards the beginning of his Reformation work, entertained high hopes of the conversion of the Jews. In a sermon dating from 1521 he says: "So it is certain that the Jews will still say to Christ, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'" He refers in proof hereof to several Old Testament passages, amongst them being Hosea iii. 4, 5, which he thinks denotes the Jews in his own age, and he adds: "With this also accords Romans xi. 25, 26, which says, 'Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.' God grant that the time may be at hand, as we hope it is. Amen." In his treatise, *Jesus was a genuine Jew* (1523), and in his two letters to the converted Jews, Bernhard and Jessla (1537), he expresses himself less positively, but still entertains good hopes that many Jews will come to repentance. However, shortly afterwards, he had some bitter experiences of the relapsing of many converted Jews to Judaism, and that seems to have exercised considerable influence on his expectations about the conversion of the Jews; for in a couple of treatises dated 1543 (*The Jews and their Lies* and *Schemhamphoras*) he speaks in an altogether different tone. Now he even wishes to "burn their synagogues, compel them to work, and treat them

without mercy." Of their conversion he has no longer the slightest expectation. Now, he even says that Paul in Romans xi. 25 means something quite different, but he does not tell us what. It, however, appears from other utterances of his that he regards the passage in essentially the same way as Calvin. "To convert Jews is as impossible as to convert devils." "A Jew's heart is so wood-, stone-, iron-, devil-hard that it cannot be moved," etc.

(e) It was this latest view of Luther's which unfortunately became the general one within the Old Lutheran Church. No doubt Brentz and Melancthon had already expressed themselves cautiously and indefinitely. Thus Melancthon, in his exposition of Romans xi. 25, 26, says: "I do not know whether the apostle here means to say that there will still take place some general conversion of the Jews or Gentiles. Since this is a mystery we must leave it to God." But the later writers, at least the majority of them, totally deny a future general conversion of Jews and Gentiles. "The fulness of the Gentiles" became toned down to "many Gentiles," and "all Israel" to "some Jews," or at the best "most Jews," or finally (so the majority), "the Church consisting of Jews and Gentiles." They set a value on being wise beyond what is written, in spite of the exhortation of the apostle not to be self-wise.

(f) There were, however, some voices which raised themselves against this explaining away of God's Word, and would at least maintain that that passage in the Epistle to the Romans announced a conversion of a multitude of Jews in the future; but since Calixtus, who most vigorously maintained this, and who, on the whole, expounded the Epistle correctly (in his book on *The Last Judgment*), with respect to the conversion of the Gentiles and of the Jews, was strongly suspected of doubtful orthodoxy on other points, he was decried for heresy. The pious Spener did not permit himself to be terrified by this mad heresy cry, but took up the view of Calixtus, and asserted it in several books (in his well-known *Pious Desires*, in his *Hope for Better Days*, and in his *Creed*), and even maintained it positively on his deathbed.* But strangely enough, he committed the mistake of placing the conversion of the Jews before that of the heathen, and of referring both to the millennial kingdom. Of course he was also charged with heresy, and Neumann wrote a book against him, as Calow had done to controvert Calixtus; but the times had so far changed that his greatest and worthiest opponent (Löscher) acknowledged that "this doctrine was not to be rejected." Succeeding orthodox authors speak with much greater caution on this point, and do not venture so summarily to condemn this doctrine.†

(g) In modern times, since it has become customary to pay careful attention to the words of the text in the interpretation of Scripture, it has been acknowledged by nearly all expositors of importance that Scripture teaches that a general conversion of the Jews will take place. The few who still oppose this view (e.g. Hengstenberg) show clearly enough that it is practically dogmatic prejudice which leads them to take up the position they occupy.

* Vide hereon—Hofsbach's *Ph. J. Spener*, ii. pp. 32 and 293 (1st ed.). Also L. Schmid's *Geschichte des Pietismus*, p. 316.

† Cf. *Buddei Compendium*, p. 353.

C.—THE GREAT EVENTS AT THE TIME OF THE END

When the Gentiles and the Jews have entered the Church, the Church will reach its flowering season, a season in which its spiritual life will pulsate with such vigour that, compared with preceding times, it may be called "life from the dead" (Rom. xi. 15). And it is very natural that this should be the case. Such a gigantic increase, such a rich addition of new forces, cannot do otherwise than work in a reviving and renewing manner upon the whole body of the Church.

But, on the other hand, it is perhaps almost as natural that this flowering should only be of short duration. The great crowds will not only bring new forces to the Church, but will likewise expose it to new dangers, the special dangers in which wholesale conversions always involve the life of the Church, the dangers of worldliness. During the seasons of such numerous conversions there is much that the overpowering influence of the kingdom of God, so to say, has torn away with it, as a river in violent flood overflows its banks and carries off large masses of the soil. But these masses of soil are not dissolved by the water, they only mingle with it and make it muddy. They increase its bulk, but decrease its clearness. So it happened when the Church became a State Church and seemed to stand victorious and triumphant in the face of the persecutions,—and so will it always happen when it becomes a Church of the world.

To this must be added still another fact which points in the same direction. When the kingdom of God stands as a united body of Jewish and Gentile Christians, and all the peoples of the world have supplied their quota to it, the Prince of Darkness will thereby be incited to a still more desperate assault upon it. And then the large masses of those who have been drawn into the Church will afford him a fruitful field to work upon. Among these he will soon succeed in bringing about a great "falling away" (2 Thess. ii. 3), and so prepare the way for the "man of sin," "the son of perdition" (Antichrist), who shall be "revealed in his

time" (2 Thess. ii. 3-6; Rev. xiii.-xix.), *i.e.* when all the preparatory stages have been gone through.

But the time of Antichrist will not be very long (only a week of years); for the Lord will come and crush him, raise up the believing dead, and establish the millennial kingdom (Rev. xx. 1-6), at the end of which the Lord will hold the Judgment and set up the final and eternal kingdom of glory with which we are first to occupy ourselves in the third and last section of the Book of Revelation. Meanwhile we must turn our attention to Antichrist and the millennial kingdom.

1. ANTICHRIST

Antichrist—what is the meaning of the word? It means one who opposes Christ or is a self-appointed substitute for Christ; one who without any authority seeks to set himself up in the stead of Christ, occupy His place, ascend His throne. These two in reality are combined, for the one who wrongfully seeks to set himself in the place of the proper king revolts against him and is thus likewise his antagonist. It must be admitted, however, that it is especially the conception of an antagonist to Christ that is apparent in the scriptural accounts of this characteristic personality. He does not give himself out really to be Christ, is not merely a false Christ; but all through he appears as the bitterest opponent of Christ and His kingdom. There will be many "false Christs" (Matt. xxiv. 24; Mark xiii. 22), and these are also in a certain sense Antichrists, but none of them is *the* Antichrist, the great and real Antichrist, of whom we are here speaking—they are only precursors of him, preparing the way for him, as the prophets and John the Baptist prepared the way for the true Christ the Messiah. These false Christs derive their authority from the Christ-idea, and pretend to be preachers of that idea. Antichrist, on the other hand, cannot of course appear as Christ, as the Son of God, since he makes himself out to be the only God, and therefore opposes God and everything divine (*cf.* 2 Thess. ii. 4). He is in reality both Antigod and Antichrist; as much an opponent of God as of Christ. But this does not prevent him from imitating Christ in order

to accommodate himself to the customary notions of those whom he wishes to seduce. Of this there are manifest traces in the antichristian beasts represented in Revelation xiii. The first beast imitates the number 7 of the Lamb, even although it is in such a way as to be a caricature (Rev. xiii. 1, v. 6), and of the second beast it is expressly said that "he had two horns like a lamb" (Rev. xiii. 11).

The fundamental thought which Antichrist represents is very old. It consists in this, that a mortal, under the potent influence of the prince of darkness, the devil, becomes not only estranged from God, but actually with full consciousness sets himself up in opposition to God, seeks to counteract His kingdom, and frustrate His plans and purposes. Some have been willing to see such a representative of this thought in Nimrod, the founder of the first world-kingdom, and the leader in the revolt against God (Nimrod probably means, Let us revolt). This was the revolt at the building of the Tower of Babel,¹ the purpose of which seems to have been to oppose the injunction of the Lord, "Replenish the earth" (Gen. i. 28), and to render superfluous both His promise that no new Deluge should come upon the earth (for the tower was to be higher than all the mountains which were submerged by the Deluge) and the divine way to heaven by means of salvation (for the top of the tower was to reach heaven). Such opponents of God have been seen in Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim. iii. 8), the Egyptian soothsayers, who performed miracles by their satanic arts, which were to rival God's and prevent the people from believing on God (Ex. vii. 11, viii. 7). Finally, reference has been made to the false prophet Balaam, whose purpose was to curse and destroy the people of God,—an intention which he showed by his wicked advice (Num. xxxi. 16), although the Lord so overruled matters that the curse was turned into a glorious blessing (Num. xxii.—xxiv., xxxi. 16)—and to Goliath, who took up such a position towards David and the Old Testament kingdom of God as the Antichrist will take up towards David's son and the kingdom of God in the last times.

¹ Vide hereon Dahle's *Bibelske Foredrag* (Biblical Lectures), pp. 160–65. Cf. Buddei, *Hist. Vet. Test.*, i. pp. 182–87.

It certainly cannot be denied that all these individuals were, more or less, if not really preachers of, yet at least an expression of, the fundamental thought of Antichrist, and were actually precursors and types of the real Antichrist. But more they were not.

The prediction relating to the real Antichrist we meet for the first time in the Prophet Daniel, and that in a double form, viz., partly as a prophecy about Antichrist's great prototype, Antiochus Epiphanes, and thereby indirectly of Antichrist, and partly as a direct announcement of the coming appearance of Antichrist himself.

To the former category belongs the prediction in Daniel viii. 3-25, xi. 21-45.

The prophet sees a ram (the Medo-Persian imperial kingdom) cast down to the ground by a he-goat (the Græco-Macedonian kingdom), between the eyes of which there was a notable horn (Alexander the Great). The great horn, however, was broken (by Alexander's sudden death and the disintegration of his kingdom), and in its place there grew up four famous horns (the partition of his kingdom into four: Syria, Egypt, Thrace, and Macedonia), and from one of these (Syria) there grew out a little horn (Antiochus Epiphanes) "which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land" (his wars for the extension of his kingdom, and especially his ravages in Judea—"the pleasant land"). And the further the description of the horn proceeds the clearer does it become that the reference is actually to a person. He waxes great even to the host of heaven, and casts down some of the stars (some of God's people) to the earth and stamps upon them, indeed he even lays hands upon the Lord's sanctuary (the temple in Jerusalem) and abolishes His sacrifices. Great numbers of people are given to him (slain), and he casts down the truth to the ground. His power continues until 2300 evenings and mornings¹ have come and gone, namely, for from six to seven

¹ According to the original the expression is evening-mornings. Some think that the evenings and the mornings are to be counted separately, so that they therefore become only 1150 days. This makes about three and a half years, corresponding to the latter half of the Antichrist's week of years in the Revela-

years, corresponding with the Antichrist's week of years in the Revelation, to which we have already referred in its place.

That is the vision described in Daniel viii. 3-14. In verses 19-26 the angel gives the prophet an explanation of that which has just been set forth, and which we have already turned to account. We therefore only add here, that what the explanation expressly tells us is that this little horn is a king, fierce of countenance and understanding dark sentences, who "shall destroy the mighty and the holy people," exercise great craft and "stand up against the Prince of princes" (God), but yet at last "shall be broken without hand" (destroyed by the dispensation of God, without falling on the battlefield).

In the parallel passage (Dan. xi. 21-45) this person is further described, and in such a way that it is easy to recognize Antiochus Epiphanes, as we know him from the books of the Maccabees, and also from the Greek historian Polybius and several others.¹ On this point nearly all expositors are agreed.² His history fits in wonderfully with this prophecy, so well, indeed, that several modern authors have even supposed that this portion of Daniel must have been written after the event, a supposition, however, which we do not purpose discussing here.

Antiochus Epiphanes was king of Syria in the years 175-164 B.C. But it was only on his expedition to Egypt in 170 that he came into close contact with the Jews and began to persecute them. It can therefore with truth be said in Daniel viii. 14, that his persecution of the Jews was to last

tion, therefore the Antichrist's actual period of dominion. But the view indicated in the text agrees better with history. That mornings and evenings are mentioned instead of days is due to this, that the sacrifices he abolished were the daily morning and evening sacrifices in the temple.

¹ Cf. 1 Maccabees 1 *et seq.*; 2 Maccabees iv. *et seq.*; Polyb., xxix. 11. Appian, *Diod. Sic.*, and the Roman historian Livy, also refer to him; likewise, and in more detail, the Jewish historian Josephus, who has much to say about his rule, and especially about his unspeakable cruelty to the Jews, and his forcible attempt to wrest from them their ancestral faith. Cf. also Dean Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*, iii. pp. 288 *et seq.*, where there is an excellent characterization of this strange king.

² Cf. hereon the Commentaries, especially Hävernicks, Keil, Kranichfeld, Zöckler, etc.

between six and seven years (170–164). His surname, Epiphanes, means the shining one; but on account of his many follies, Greek wit transformed Epiphanes into Epimanes, the foolish, frantic one; and certain it is that there was much of folly in him, but along with the folly there was something of genius too, and he was especially a master in craft and flatteries (Dan. viii. 25, xi. 21, 23, 32). He was excessively vain, and a great admirer of Greek culture and worship, which he attempted to introduce throughout his dominions, to the prejudice of the national culture and religion (Dan. xi. 37–39). And on that account he displayed great cruelty towards the Jews, who utterly refused to give up their fathers' faith, and would not sacrifice to his Greek gods. He caused fearful bloodshed in Jerusalem, desecrated the temple, forbade the people to read the law, abolished the sacrifices to Jehovah, and compelled many to offer to idols; until at last the brave Maccabean family rose up against him, and after tremendous conflicts and unspeakable hardships succeeded in setting a limit to his deeds of violence (1 Macc. i.–vi.; Josephus, *Antiq.*, xii, xiii.; cf. F. Hofmann, iv., Leipzig, 1873).

But although it is indubitable that this prophecy mainly refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, still the picture of him in these passages is so coloured that what is said does not fit him so completely as it suits the Antichrist, of whom he is a type. It is as if the prophet looked quite beyond the type and away to Antichrist himself. Thus when it is said, "The vision belongeth to the time of the end" (Dan. viii. 17 R.V.), that certainly cannot refer to Antiochus Epiphanes; but it suits Antichrist wonderfully well, and thoroughly accords with what the apostle says of him in 2 Thessalonians ii. 4.

And it is not accidental that Antiochus Epiphanes has become a type of Antichrist. He is really the first man in sacred history who set himself the task of systematically rooting out the true worship of God, and attempting by force to compel the people of God to give up their faith, yea, cruelly persecuting everyone who would not do so, and that is how Antichrist is to act at the time of the end (Rev. xiii. 7, 15).

It is somewhat different in the case of the vision in

Daniel vii.; for here we certainly have a prediction which refers directly to Antichrist himself. The prophet sees four beasts emerging from the sea (the ocean of humanity), of which the first had the form of a lion, the second of a bear, the third of a leopard, whilst the fourth is described as a fearful monster which with its great iron teeth crushed and with its feet stamped upon all things.

There can scarcely be any doubt that these four forms of beasts correspond with the four parts of the great image in Nebuchadnezzar's vision in Daniel ii. (the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs partly of iron and partly of clay), and that both visions designate the four great imperial kingdoms—the Assyrio-Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Græco-Macedonian, and the Roman.¹

The last of them is described in both visions as an iron-kingdom. In the first vision it is said expressly of that kingdom, that it will be strong as iron, and “as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, . . . shall it break in pieces and bruise” (Dan. ii. 40). That suits the Roman Empire wonderfully; for it subdued and ruled all the then known world with iron hand with the sword, which in the language of the Romans—significantly enough—very frequently is called “the iron” (*ferrum*, instead of *gladius*). With relentless iron courage Rome went forth to her wars of conquest, and with merciless severity placed her iron heel upon the necks of nations. With an inflexibility like that of iron she kept her numerous provinces in check, and with iron will imposed upon the world her laws.

This fourth kingdom can be said, in a certain sense, still to exist. Almost all the great civilized states of Europe

¹ We have here adopted the ordinary current Church-view of the vision of the world-kingdoms; but we do not forget that many modern authors, who however vary considerably in their opinions regarding the separate kingdoms, consider the Græco-Macedonian, with its ramifications, to be the fourth and last, and therefore also regard the prophecy concerning Antichrist in Daniel vii., and that in viii. and xi., as one and the same, *i.e.* as a direct prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes, and only indirectly of Antichrist, of which he was a type. Since lack of space prevents us from thoroughly examining all the reasons for and against each of these views, we must limit ourselves to indicating how fully and completely the description of the fourth world-kingdom in Daniel suits the Roman Empire and no other. This, in our view, is quite decisive,

have sprung from Rome, and its laws (Roman Law) form still the basis of the legislation of all European nations. This relation, according to the prophecies, will continue to exist until it is for ever succeeded by Christ's kingdom of glory, when the stone, shaped by no human hand (the kingdom of God), becomes a mountain which will break in pieces the whole image (Dan. ii. 44, 45), *i.e.* all the kingdoms of the world, even the last, the kingdom of Antichrist.

The fourth beast had 10 horns, *i.e.* a perfection of power (horns in Scripture designate strength, and the number 10, perfection). Among the 10 horns there grows up a new horn which forces out 3 of the other horns, and "in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Dan. vii. 8), another indication that it is in reality a person to whom reference is being made.

Immediately after the appearance of this person the prophet saw the judgment being held. "The Ancient of days" placed Himself upon the throne, and "one like the Son of Man" came with the clouds of heaven (this is the first passage in Scripture where Christ is described as the "Son of Man"), and by the Ancient of days (the Father) "there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," after "the books were opened" (Dan. vii. 9-14; *cf.* Rev. xx. 12), and the judgment set according to what was written in the books. That one is therefore the last great opponent that the kingdom of God will have upon the earth, and this account exactly suits Antichrist according to the sketch which the New Testament gives us of him—indeed, suits him and no one else.

In Daniel vii. 15-27 we receive an explanation of the vision. Here it is expressly said, that the four beasts are four kingdoms, and that when the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire which still survives in our legal code, our institutions, and our civilization) has had its full number of kings (10)—*i.e.* completed its career, had its time—there will in succession to them come a king who will be different from all the others (ver. 24), just as the fourth world-kingdom, in which he arises, is different from all previous kingdoms (ver. 23). "He shall speak great words against the Most High (God), and shall wear out the saints of the Most High (the believers), and

think to change times and laws (overthrow the existing legislation, the moral order): and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (ver. 25), *i.e.* $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, exactly like Antichrist according to the Revelation (xii. 14, xiii. 5). When this period has passed the judgment will take place. His power will be taken from him and an everlasting kingdom set up (Dan. vii. 26, 27). He is destroyed, therefore, only at Christ's second advent. That the kingdom of glory which is now set up has a precursor (the millennial kingdom) is one of the things which were still hidden from the sight of the Old Testament prophet, and which the last prophetic book in the Bible has been the first to reveal to us.

In what we have been setting forth we have held by the leading thought of the prophecies of Daniel, since it is only these which concern us here. We have carefully avoided entering into details, of which many afford difficulties so great that an attempt to clear them up would lead us further than the plan of this book permits.

What we have learned from this prophecy is therefore this, that from the fourth world-kingdom in the latter days a personality shall arise who will openly take up an attitude of opposition to God, suspend all law and order (*cf.* the expression "the lawless one" in 2 Thess. ii. 8 R.V.), set himself up in the place of God, abolish worship of Him, and rage against His true worshippers with violent persecutions for a period of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, and then be destroyed at the coming of the Lord to judgment.

We have already in a note indicated that there are some who find practically the same substance in both of these prophecies of Daniel which we have kept quite distinct from each other. There is undoubtedly much similarity between the contents of both of them; but that is, in our opinion, natural enough, since both in reality aim at Antichrist, although the one does so directly, the other indirectly. But there is, with all their similarity, this essential difference between them, that whilst the prophecy, which we have considered to be an indirect prediction of the coming of Antichrist, makes him spring from one of the branches of the third

world-kingdom, and does not in the least hint that his work shall first cease at the judgment, on the other hand, the latter prophecy (the direct one) makes him spring from the fourth and last world-kingdom, and exercise his destructive activity right up to the judgment. That is an essential difference which makes it impossible to consider both as merely different forms of one and the same prediction. It must also be noticed that in Daniel vii. 25 it is distinctly said that the person there referred to will reign for $3\frac{1}{2}$ times (years), which, according to the Revelation, is the very period during which Antichrist is to bear sway, whilst the statement of time in Daniel viii. 14 can quite as easily suit the period of from six to seven years during which Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted the Jews.¹

We now turn to the New Testament.

Attempts have been made to find even in the discourses of our Lord some references to Antichrist, but such attempts have been due to misunderstandings. Jesus undoubtedly speaks of times coming when there will arise false prophets and false Christs, who will do signs and wonders and try to lead

¹ On the basis of these predictions of Daniel the Jews drew a picture of the future in which even Antichrist or Anti-Messiah has his place. In the form this picture of the future assumed in later Judaism, it appears somewhat like this. After Elijah, who has returned to the earth, has prepared the way "Messiah" appears. Yet this is not the actual Messiah, "the Son of David," but a forerunner whom they call "Messiah, the Son of Joseph," because he is of the tribe of Joseph, not of Judah, like "Messiah, the Son of David." This preparatory work now consists mainly in gathering the dispersed of Israel and leading them back to their own land. He meets, however, much opposition, and suffers great hardships. To him the later Jews often apply what, in the Prophets, is said of the sufferings of Messiah; whilst others apply it to the people of Israel, "the servant of the Lord." At last he falls before Anti-Messiah, who is the leader of the opposition to him. Of this Anti-Messiah, whom the Jews call "Armillus" (probably a perversion of Romulus, as the representative of the Roman kingdom hostile to Judaism*), the later Judaism has much to say. He will be born in a supernatural way of a female statue of stone in the city of

* The Jewish scholar Grätz gives another explanation. He derives it from the Greek word *ἐρημοῦν*, to desolate, *λαός*, people, consequently like Balaam, *i.e.* destroyer of the people. (*Vide* Levy, *Chald. Wörterb. über die Targumim*, i. p. 66). This explanation has been already hinted at by Buxtorf in his Rabbinical Lexicon under *ἀρμυλλός*.

astray the very elect, if that were possible (Matt. xxiv. 3-13, 22-27; Luke xxi. 8-28). In these passages the reference is not to the actual Antichrist, but only to false Christs. Antichrist pretends to be God; but these merely make themselves out falsely to be the messengers of God. When this one of them or that one pretends to be Christ, the Son of God, he practically acknowledges God as the one from whom he claims to have his power and authority. Such an one is no doubt to all intents and purposes an Antichrist, one who puts himself in the place of the real and true Christ, and thereby desires to depose Him from His position. But he is not therefore Antichrist, as described to us by Daniel and Paul and the Revelation, although he must be said to be a strong manifestation of that antichristian spirit whose last and mature fruit will be the Antichrist.

We have something very different in the passages in the Epistles of John which speak of Antichrist. There, for the first time, we meet in the Bible the word Antichrist, although the term used by the apostle does not fully express the conception which, in later usage, has been implied in the

Rome, with whom the offscourings of the Church have committed adultery. He will be 24 feet high and 24 (some say 4) feet broad, and have red deep-seated eyes, between which there is a space of 6 inches. His forehead is leprous, his hair is golden (or red), and the soles of his feet are green. One of his eyes is larger than the other, and the one hand longer than the other. One of his ears is quick to hear; the other is deaf. To evil advice he turns the former, to good counsel the latter. He will appear before the nations (*i.e.* non-Israelites), and say: "I am Messiah; I am your God." And the nations will gather around him. Then he will send messengers to the Israelites and invite them to do homage to him; but this they will refuse. Then there will be war. The Jews will at first overcome their opponents and slay 200,000 of them. But eventually their Messiah (the Son of Joseph) will fall in the fight. Then they must yield. They now become the subjects of fearful persecution by Armillus, and must flee to the wilderness of Judea and subsist on the herbs of the field. But this tribulation will help to purify them. Then will be fulfilled such prophetic passages as Zechariah xiii. 9; Ezekiel xx. 38. However, the tribulation will not last long. Soon will appear the real Messiah, the Son of David (according to Dan. vii. 13), to whom Armillus must bow. He will slay the wicked "with the breath of His lips" (Isa. ii. 4), and set up a kingdom of glory for Israel. (*Vide especially Weber's System der altsynagogalen palast. Theologi*, pp. 342-47, and Eisenm., *Entdecktes Judenthum*, ii. pp. 705-14. Cf. also Buxtorf's *Synag. Jud.*, pp. 726-28, and *Lexicon Rabb.*, pp. 221-24; as well as Hornbeck's *De convinc. et convert. Judæis*, pp. 253, 254.)

word. For he dwells mainly on contemporary deniers of Christ, chiefly perhaps on those so-called Docetic heretics who endeavoured to reduce the whole existence of Christ on earth to an illusive semblance without any real substance. Of such he writes: "Every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already" (1 John iv. 3 R.V.). "Many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the Antichrist" (2 John v. 7 R.V.).

But even in John there are indications that he sees in these antichristian phenomena of his own day precursors of the great and real Antichrist who is to appear in the distant future. Only thus can we explain such a passage as this: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John ii. 18). That, indeed, must not be interpreted as implying that John regarded his own age as the last time in the most literal sense; it indicates only that he even then discovered prominent features of the antichristian character of the last time. It is as if behind all these different Antichrists (precursors of the Antichrist),—far away in the distance—he catches a glimpse of the great and actual Antichrist; for only to this interpretation are his words suitable: "He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii. 22). Yes, quite true; when the Father is also denied we have advanced a step further. The only thing lacking now is that this denier should likewise claim to be God, and then we have the complete picture of the real Antichrist.

Quite remarkable is the way in which the apostle introduces his utterances regarding Antichrist in 1 John ii. 18 *et seq.* He writes: "As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (literally, "a last time"). From this, in the first place, he evidently supposes the announcement of the coming of Antichrist to be a subject

familiar to his readers, a subject which needed no further explanation. They already knew what Antichrist was. Then he intimates to them, as something new, that there had already appeared several Antichrists—men in whom the antichristian nature strongly manifested itself, and who therefore were precursors and types of the great Antichrist. Finally, he draws from this the conclusion that they had already reached the latter times, *i.e.* one of the stages of the last time. It does not seem as if this were to be regarded chronologically, but rather actually; not so that the end was necessarily very near, but that the satanic forces, which at the time of the end were to appear fully developed, had already manifested themselves. That Antichrist belonged to the time of the end was at the outset well understood both by the apostle himself and by his readers; and if the precursors of Antichrist (the “many Antichrists”) had already appeared, it was now necessary to cope with the forces whose matured fruit (Antichrist) would reveal itself at the time of the end; and practically they already felt the pestiferous breath of the spiritual atmosphere of the last time (“It is the (a) last time,” ver. 18).

We therefore consider that the apostle’s thought, as it were, divides itself between the real Antichrist, whose future coming stands before him and his readers as a familiar fact, and the many contemporary Antichrists (men in whom the antichristian spirit was already active); yet in the best interest of his readers he dwells on these latter, and only, as it were in passing, refers to the great Antichrist whose forerunners they were, and after whom he gave them a name (Antichrists) which clearly designated their relation to this last great opponent of Christ.

It is, however, first from the Apostle Paul that we get a definite and clear account of the nature and appearance of Antichrist. The pertinent passages are 1 Timothy iv. 1–3; 2 Timothy iii. 1–5, and specially 2 Thessalonians ii. 1–12.

The relation between these passages may be set forth thus; the first and second refer only to the latter-day manifestation of the antichristian character, whilst the third refers to Antichrist himself.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. iv. 1-3). “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers,” etc. (2 Tim. iii. 1-5). Here we have a picture of the great falling away and the increasing ungodliness which in the latter days will precede and make possible the coming of Antichrist, and of which in what follows we shall hear more. There are undeniably, in this picture, features which unconsciously remind us of the papacy and its celibacy, its regulations about eating and its ordinances about fasting, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that in the Roman papacy the antichristian spirit has been vigorous and active, however much we may oppose the old view that the pope himself is Antichrist.

We find in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1-12 a passage which directly treats of Antichrist, and is indeed without question the clearest and most important declaration we have bearing upon the subject. The thirteenth chapter of the Revelation and others that follow, which we have formerly considered in our survey of the substance of the Revelation, fill out and complete the picture in some points; but it is from this passage that the picture gets its light, without which it would have remained very obscure. Let us therefore regard these verses somewhat carefully.

The apostle begins by saying that the coming of Christ was really not so near at hand as many taught. There were those who even appealed to him as their authority for the view that Christ's advent was nigh, and some did not hesitate to support this by false epistles which they attributed to him. No, great events must still happen before the Lord's return, and of these events one of the most important was the coming of Antichrist. Paul certainly does not call him by that name—he designates him “the son

of perdition," "the man of sin" (ver. 3); but the context plainly shows that it is Antichrist he means. Before Antichrist can appear, however, humanity must be ripe to receive him; in other words, there must first be a great "falling away," *i.e.* a falling away from the faith. But even this falling away cannot come to pass before the restraint on ungodliness has been removed. The chronological order will therefore be: first, that which keeps back the full development of ungodliness will be removed, then the great falling away will take place, and finally Antichrist himself will come as the matured fruit of that falling away.

The antichristian spirit was already in vigorous activity when the apostle wrote. He himself says: "The mystery of lawlessness doth already work"; but he adds, "only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one" (Antichrist) (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8 R.V.). Now what is it that restrains the development of ungodliness and thereby also the coming of Antichrist?

On this point expositors have exhausted all their acumen, but without arriving at any certain result. Some have said it is the Holy Ghost. But the activity of the Holy Ghost in the Church will never cease so long as there is a living Church, and such a Church there will be on earth,—as we have previously seen,—even in the time of Antichrist. Perhaps the same objection might be employed against those who see in Christ Himself the one who restrains Antichrist; for Christ will never be absent from His Church (Matt. xxviii. 20), and so Antichrist could never come. Others suppose that it is the apostolate with the extraordinary gifts of grace; but the apostles are all dead long ago, and Antichrist has not yet come. Others again have assumed that it is the gospel or the intercessory Church; but none of these will ever cease. The Irvingites think that what restrains is the elect multitude who will be removed to join the Lord before Antichrist comes; but, apart from other reasons altogether, it is an error to imagine that this removal will take place before the coming of Antichrist; the removal is not to take place until the Lord

comes for judgment upon Antichrist (*cf.* 2 Thess. ii. 8 with 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17), consequently not before but after the appearance of Antichrist. Thus this explanation is quite excluded. Others have thought that Paul himself was the hindrance, and they appeal to his words to the elders in Ephesus, that after his departure grievous wolves will enter in among them, not sparing the flock (Acts xx. 29, 30). There certainly appeared after his death many false teachers who caused much confusion, but not one whom this sketch of Antichrist suits. There are also those who have thought that when the first Church in Jerusalem, at the destruction of the city, was swept away, then that was gone which especially restrained Antichrist. But Jerusalem fell, and Antichrist did not appear as a result. A somewhat ancient opinion is that the restraining influence is the divine appointment of the time for the coming of Antichrist. So long as the time appointed has not come, Antichrist cannot come; the divine decree (foreordination) keeps back his coming.¹ But here there is manifest mention of something which is a check on the growth of evil in the world, and that cannot be reconciled with the view here set forth. Others again have pointed to the friendly relation between Jewish and Gentile Christians at the first as a mighty hindrance to the growth of evil, and especially to the spread of persecution. When this concord came to an end, Antichrist was to come; but in that case he ought to have come long ago. Some saw Antichrist in the Roman emperor, Caligula (during his reign from 37 to 41 A.D.), who in a way made himself God, and they thought that what restrained him so far as Judea was concerned was the Syrian prefect, Lucius Vitellius, who was the governor of Judea. So long as he continued governor there was no persecution of the Jews and no abomination of idolatry forced upon them. He was therefore the one who restrained.² But this was something

¹ Such was Theodoret's opinion.

² Such is the view advanced, *e.g.*, by Hugo Grotius in his *Annotations* to 2 Thessalonians ii. 7. After Lucius Vitellius retired from his position (A.D. 40), Petronius, his successor in the government of Syria, attempted to set up, at the emperor's command, an image of Caligula for worship in the temple at Jerusalem, an attempt which was frustrated by the energetic

that preceded the time when the apostle wrote, without taking into consideration the fact that all such explanation is meaningless and lies quite outside of the spirit and scope of the passage. An amusing example of what scholars can light upon, we have in the very original interpretation which the famous Professor Ewald suggests. According to him, what restrains Antichrist is the Prophet Elijah; for Elijah, he says, is one of the two witnesses (Rev. xi. 3 *et seq.*) who are to appear upon the earth before the coming of Antichrist. Until Elijah has returned to the earth, Antichrist cannot appear. Therefore it may be said that Elijah—or rather, his delay in coming—keeps back Antichrist. Such views require no refutation.

Much more probable than all these and similar explanations is the ancient one, that it was the Roman emperor, or at least the Roman Empire, that restrained. Antichrist was to appear as a ruler overthrowing all law and order, and that could not happen, they thought, so long as the Roman Empire with its legislation still stood firm. To this view also many modern theologians, the great majority indeed, have given their support, but instead of the Roman emperor and the judicial system of the Roman Empire, they place the civil authority and the legislative system and order which that authority is designed to maintain. So long as there is a civil authority and a judicial system, the way is not open for him who will reverse and overthrow all order.

This old view receives considerable support from the fact that what restrained was something already well known to his readers from the apostle's own verbal communication, and consequently must be one of those things which even then were in active operation. For he says: "Remember ye not that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? and now ye know what withholdeth that He might be revealed in His time" (2 Thess. ii. 5, 6). That statement can be more easily understood if the then existing civil authority and judicial system (the protection of which he, as a Roman

opposition of the Jews and the intervention of the Jewish prince, Agrippa, who successfully besought the emperor to withdraw his instruction (*vide* Josephus, *Jew. Antiq.* viii. 8. 1 *et seq.*

citizen, had frequently enjoyed; *vide, e.g.*, Acts xvi. 37, 38, xviii. 12-16, xxi. 31, 32, xxii. 25-29, xxv. 11, 12) were aimed at. It would also better explain why in this passage he does not further refer to the subject, but only reminds them of his earlier verbal declarations regarding it; for nothing which concerned the Roman authority, and especially the emperor, could, under the existing circumstances, be mentioned more definitely in writing without the risk of drawing in some way or other upon himself or his readers the suspicion of desiring to interfere in political affairs.

But even if the apostle had mainly the Roman Empire and its judicial system in his mind, that is no reason why the same idea may not be applied to the civil authority and judicial system of all ages. We are even disposed to go a step further, and seek that which restrains in the fundamental moral conceptions that underlie every judicial system and form its necessary basis—we mean the conceptions of right and wrong, duty and responsibility. A judicial system can be overthrown; but so long as those conceptions exist and are respected it can be restored. On the other hand, if these are abolished, all judicial order and all morality become quite impossible, and the way is paved at once for the “lawless one,” as Antichrist is called in 2 Thessalonians ii. 8 R.V. We believe that the very efforts to abolish these fundamental moral conceptions are the most decided antichristian signs in our day, and it must be confessed that the infidelity of our age to an unpleasant degree distinguishes itself in this respect from that of former days. Are not the boldest opponents of Christianity deliberately seeking to assert that everything man does, he does of necessity, because he cannot act otherwise (Determinism)? But in that case he has no moral obligation to be otherwise than he is (the notion of duty is abolished), nor any responsibility for acting in a particular way, since he could not act otherwise (responsibility disappears). Then it is really meaningless to have civil laws for man’s conduct, and lawlessness must be recognized if one is to be consistent. But if law is meaningless, it is of course also meaningless to speak of transgression

and to punish transgressors as criminals. These are just what they are, and cannot be otherwise; they may therefore be objects of pity, but never of punishment. (Hence the increasing friendliness to criminals nowadays in the camp of unbelief.) And if the conceptions, law and transgression, have been abolished, it can only be because the conceptions, right and wrong, are no longer recognised; for it is the boundary-line between right and wrong that the law is designed to maintain. If no such boundary-line exists, of course there is no longer any judicial system, nor anything to regulate the life of the individual. Everyone may act according to his own disposition exactly as he thinks to be best for himself. (Here we have the basis of the utilitarianism which has become so fashionable among the unbelievers of the present day.)

If these thoughts are successfully instilled into the consciousness of the masses—and, unfortunately, considerable progress in that direction has been made—all law and order in the community will cease; and what is even worse, there will be a total lack of moral foundation and of the conditions necessary for the restoration of law and order. Might will have taken the place of right, and necessity the place of liberty. It seems to us that it is towards that goal that the unbelieving thought of the present day (evolution, determinism, utilitarianism) is hurrying; and if the goal is gained the practical issue will be socialism and anarchy, which in the domain of practical life exactly correspond to the spiritual and ethical anarchy of the thought-life. If that becomes an accomplished fact, then what restrains will be removed and the way will be paved for “the lawless one.” It is certainly out of such conditions that Antichrist will arise.

But along with that which restrains, the apostle speaks also of the one who restrains (2 Thess. ii. 7), consequently of a person. Those who concluded that what restrains is the Roman judicial system, as a rule understood the one who restrains to be the Roman emperor as the head and guardian of that system. But some of these emperors were the very worst transgressors of the law, and even so cruelly perse-

cuted the Church of God that the early Christians came to the conclusion that one of these emperors, Nero, was none other than the Antichrist himself. That which restrains ungodliness is doubtless something higher than the laws of the Roman Empire,—to wit, moral conceptions, so long as they are respected in the community,—and probably the one who restrains is really some person other and higher than the Roman emperor. Then who can he be?

We believe, we must acknowledge, that Hofmann is right when he considers this personality to be one of the angels. Such a view certainly best accords with the analogy from the kindred passage in the Prophet Daniel (x. 5-13 and 16-20), where a prince of the angels exercised his influence, and for a long period restrained the other powers (which at a later day secured the supremacy and brought misfortunes upon the people of God), whereby the appearing of the Old Testament Antichrist (Antiochus Epiphanes) seems to have been delayed. It is perhaps the case here also that some good angel [*e.g.* Michael, "the prince of Israel" (Dan. x. 20) in the old covenant, who appears to be striving to take part in the history of the new covenant (Rev. xii. 7)] contends "against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," against him who is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. vi. 12 R.V., ii. 2), and checks their influence, so that mankind does not so soon become ripe to receive him (Antichrist) whom the dragon will conjure forth from the ocean of humanity (Rev. xiii.; *cf.* p. 257). God certainly uses His angels to keep back misfortunes from His Church until the time appointed has come (Rev. vii. 1-3), and He causes an angel to bind the old dragon (Rev. xx.); why then should He not also cause an angel to exercise a curbing influence upon efforts to ruin men's souls? Frequent mention is made of the "spirit of the age." It may possibly be the case that behind what we thus designate there lies more of an actual spirit-personality, influencing in a good or bad direction, than most of us have thought. By the spirit of the age we generally mean only the intellectual tendency and way of looking at things which assert themselves distinctively in a particular age and give to it its character. But who knows whether

there are not also special supersensible spiritual forces which at different times exercise a different influence on what we call "the spirit of the age," and set their stamp upon it, so that parallel with the conflicts of spiritual forces in the world there is also going on an invisible conflict which has its own bearing upon that spirit. The thought at least deserves consideration.

Contemporaneously with, and in consequence of, the removal of that which restrains, the great falling away begins (2 Thess. ii. 3 R.V.). This cannot consist only in some falling away from the faith, for that takes place in the Church in every age. It must be a great, universal, epoch-making and unique falling away, since the apostle summarily calls it "the falling away," and it must have been familiar as such to his readers, since he can, without further explanation, so term it.

Of such a falling away the Saviour Himself has already spoken (Matt. xxiv. 37-44; Luke xvii. 26-37). Shortly before the Lord's return there will be an audacity and recklessness in sin which can only be compared with the state of matters in the days of Noah (Gen. vi. 12). Then, as immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem, "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. xxiv. 11, 12). There will be a universal, spiritual drowsiness ("While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept," Matt. xxv. 5), and so little of the poor woman's importunate faith, that the Lord, with grief and surprise, asks if He will find any of it when He comes (Luke xviii. 8).

And the utterances already quoted from Paul's pastoral epistles (1 Tim. iv. 1-3 and 2 Tim. iii. 1-5) give us a dreadful picture of the extent and character of this falling away. It is also very natural that such a falling away should come before Christendom is ripe to receive Antichrist, who will set himself up against and abolish every thing divine, and will try to take the place of God and give himself out to be God (2 Thess. ii. 4). The soil must be well prepared before such a plant can spring from it.

If in the previous pages we have divined correctly what

it is that restrains, it will naturally follow that, when the restraining influence is removed, unbelief and ungodliness will thrive as they have never previously done. For if the fundamental moral conceptions (right and wrong, duty and responsibility) are neglected, no longer acknowledged, the foundation of the Christian faith will be undermined and destroyed. Christ has, forsooth, come to save us from sin and its guilt. But if right and wrong no longer exist, there cannot be any law—at least, not except in virtue of an inconsistency—and then, of course, there is no sin; “for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John iii. 4). And if there is no sin, who will need a Saviour? Unbelief in relation to Christ must be the necessary logical result of this destruction of the fundamental moral conceptions. And hand in hand with this unbelief there must,—as we have previously pointed out,—by the same necessity, come a moral depravity without parallel in history. And the worst of all is that the main props of all moral order will have been taken away. There will be no longer any moral law to which appeal can be made by the one who seeks to counteract the religious and moral corruption. Here the words of the Psalmist are very applicable: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. xi. 3).

From such conditions springs Antichrist, whom the apostle in this section further characterizes.

He refers to him under three different names, all of which are very significant. He calls him “the man of sin,” the “son of perdition” (2 Thess. ii. 3), and “the lawless one” (ii. 8 R.V.), or transgressor of the law.¹ He is “the man of sin,” for in him the audacity of sin has attained its highest pitch. He is “the son of perdition,” for he leads others to perdition, and he himself ends in everlasting perdition. He is, in a way, to the Church what Judas was to the Church’s Lord,—Judas, “the son of perdition” (John xvii. 12, where the very same expression is used as here). He is “the lawless one,” for his appearance is the natural result of the lawless conditions, from a moral point

¹ In the Authorized Version the name is “that Wicked,” which hardly gives the full meaning of *ἀνομος*.

of view, existing among men, and his task is to break down what is still left of law and order, so that upon the ruins of all law and order he may establish a kingdom where his will shall be the only law.

In complete agreement with these names is the sketch that follows of his active operations. He "exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" (2 Thess. ii. 4; *cf.* Dan. vii. 25); he permits worship neither of the true God nor of idols. All former worship of God must be abolished; mankind is to be made a *tabula rasa*, a tablet from which all writing has been erased, in order that he may inscribe his name upon it as the object of worship. The apostle proceeds in this line to say that he, "as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (ver. 4). This at once recalls what the Prophet Daniel has said of the forerunner of Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes, only that it is much stronger, since the real Antichrist in this respect also towers above all types of him in the history of the kingdom of God. That which seems most nearly to approach this description in the Christian era is such fearful outbreaks of ungodliness as the French Revolution displayed. Then there were those who went so far as to declare that Christianity must be abolished, and to introduce "the worship of reason," as the symbol of which they placed an opera dancer on the high altar of Nôtre Dame in Paris, and allowed the populace to dance around her in the chancel (10th Nov. 1792). But that was only an outbreak of an excited and, in its excitement, almost insane people's rage; whilst here, in the appearance of Antichrist, we have before us a well-calculated and well-arranged attempt to oust God and assume His place. Others have called to mind the apotheosis of "the people" in the present day (Demotheism; *cf.* the familiar phrase, *Vox populi, vox Dei*). There certainly can be no doubt that this is also a manifestation of an antichristian spirit; but yet it is not the perfect and proper fulfilment of the apostle's words in the passage under consideration. Here there is evident reference to a person who sets himself up as the object of worship: "He sitteth in the temple of God, as God." That scarcely

means, as some have thought, the restored temple of Jerusalem in the midst of converted Israel; it doubtless merely implies that he seeks to give himself the same central position and worship in the Church of God as Jehovah had in the temple and congregation of the old covenant. He shows that he is God, *i.e.* publicly proclaims that he is so, and commands all to worship him. That he forcibly seeks to compel obedience to this injunction of his, and cruelly persecutes all who resist it, we first learn in the Revelation (xiii. 4-8).

Of the work of Antichrist, however, the apostle does not say more, does not enter upon details. But he informs us that his appearance is accompanied by "all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. ii. 9),—consequently force and deception are the means by which he works. Christ Himself had predicted that the false prophets and false Christs should also show great signs and wonders (Matt. xxiv. 24); but in the case of Antichrist this wonder-working will be specially prominent, a feature which is also strongly emphasized by the Apostle John (Rev. xiii. 13). The wonders are not of course *per se* decisive signs of a divine commission, since they also—as here—may take place "after the working of Satan" (2 Thess. ii. 9). The opponents of Moses, the Egyptian soothsayers, did wonders (Ex. vii. 11, viii. 7), and so will Antichrist. God permits such things in order that they who in any case will not believe the truth may have all the more occasion to put their trust in lies (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11; *cf.* Rom. i. 24).

Of Antichrist's origin and end Paul speaks with the utmost clearness. His "coming is after the working of Satan" (2 Thess. ii. 9), which agrees well with the fact that according to the Revelation he is conjured forth from the sea of humanity by the dragon (Rev. xiii. 1 *et seq.*). He is the first-born of Satan, as Christ is God's first-born. He is the result of the long preparatory work of the devil in history; he appears with his co-operation, and he represents him among men, being clad in his strength, being supported and sustained by the powers of darkness. His end will be that Christ will destroy him by the manifestation of His

glory, *i.e.* by His personal coming to judge Antichrist and set up the millennial kingdom, of which we receive further information in the Revelation (xix. 11–xx. 6). “The Lord shall consume him with the spirit of His mouth.” To Him his power shall be as a handful of chaff which He blows away with a puff of His breath (*cf.* Job iv. 9; Isa. xi. 4).

That there is mention of Christ’s personal coming, and not only, as some have thought, of a powerful working of His Spirit in the Church which inwardly would overcome the antichristian influence, or of a pronounced manifestation of his convicting and punitive power in history, is quite undoubted, since the word used in the original (*παρουσία*, “coming,” ver. 8), always elsewhere in the New Testament, has this meaning when reference is made to the ascended Christ (Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 39; 1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 8, 9; Jas. v. 8; 2 Pet. i. 16, iii. 4, etc.). Here this sense of the word becomes still more undoubted by the addition of another word (*ἐπιφάνεια*, “appearing,” “brightness”), which likewise signifies Christ’s personal coming (2 Thess. ii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 10, iv. 1; Tit. ii. 13).

Attention has justly been drawn to the fact that the description of Antichrist has received such a form from the apostle that he is uniformly represented as the antitype or exact opposite of Christ. The very term “revealed” (ver. 8) hints at a comparison with the coming of Christ. It is as if Antichrist already existed before he appears,¹ and he certainly has existed in a way—in his forerunners throughout the ages, who are all manifestations of the spirit which in his person has found its highest expression. He can therefore, in a certain respect, be said to resemble Christ in this, that he has existed before his actual personal appearance in the world. The same thought is still more evident in verse 9, where there is mention of his “coming” immediately after the same term has been employed of Christ. Finally, he gives himself out openly to be what

¹ As is well known, Hofmann wishes from this expression to conclude that Antichrist actually existed before this appearing of his at the last time, since he in him sees Antiochus Epiphanes returned to the earth.

Christ actually was, viz. God (ver. 4), and, like Christ, he seals his testimony with signs and wonders (ver. 9). He does not pretend to be Christ,—indeed, he denies that there has been any Christ at all,—but yet he himself is a caricature of Christ.

If we turn from the Apostle Paul to the Revelation we see a very remarkable picture of the same terrible personality. Here his individual features are still further elaborated, but in figurative form, and they are therefore more difficult to read. But as we have already dwelt upon this picture in our survey of the contents of the Revelation (*vide* pp. 257 *et seq.*), we may here limit ourselves to pointing out its most prominent features, and especially to showing how in all essentials it agrees with what the Apostle Paul has taught us in plain words without any figurative language.

Just as the coming of Antichrist, according to Paul, “is after the working of Satan” (2 Thess. ii. 9), so in the Revelation it is the dragon (Satan) who advances to the shore of the ocean of humanity and conjures him (“the beast”) forth from it (*vide* Rev. xiii. 1–4; *cf.* also p. 257). Paul teaches, further, that Antichrist will set himself up as the object of worship (2 Thess. ii. 4); and in the Revelation the beast demands that his image be worshipped (Rev. xiii. 15, xiv. 11). In both passages the appearance of Antichrist is accompanied by signs and wonders (2 Thess. ii. 9; Rev. xiii. 14). Before his appearance there will, according to these two accounts of him, be a falling away (*cf.* 2 Thess. ii. 3 with Rev. xi. 2, the court shall be trodden under foot by the Gentiles, *vide* p. 252). Finally, the end of Antichrist, according to these passages, is the same; Christ destroys his power and holds a judgment upon him at His personal coming (2 Thess. ii. 8; Rev. xix. 11–21). He is therefore, according to both passages, the last great personal opponent of the kingdom of God before the Lord’s advent. Consequently we may be quite certain that in both passages there is reference to the same subject.

A peculiarity of the Revelation—apart from the figurative account, with Daniel’s prophecies about Antichrist as a background—is this, that Antichrist, as it were, divides himself into two, the first and the second beast, the second being

also called "the false prophet" (xvi. 13, xix. 20). The former works by violence and persecution, the latter by lying and deception, accompanied by signs and wonders (by Satan's help). The one represents the antichristian rule (physical and political power), the other the antichristian prophecy (the spiritual power). The former is the leading character, the latter is a subordinate character, since his task seems to be to induce the people to do homage to and obey the former and submit to his authority (Rev. xiii. 11-17).¹ Round these two persons gathers all that the Revelation has to tell us regarding Antichrist's persecution and seduction, the latter of which will issue in an actual worship of the image of Antichrist, and in an antichristian culture in the place of the Christian (xiii. 13-17).

Here also there is a manifest advance beyond the Pauline account, which practically only dwells on the seductions of Antichrist, his spiritual power, and consequently does not refer to the great tribulation which, according to the Revelation, will be brought upon all real Christians by Antichrist, a tribulation which was already hinted at even by Daniel (Dan. vii. 21). On this point also, as on several others, the latest seer in the Bible has seen the furthest and given us the clearest and most comprehensive representation of the distant future.

¹ Whether in reality such a subordinate person will stand by the side of Antichrist when he comes, or whether these two persons only express the two sides of Antichrist's nature and working, we leave a still undecided question. Paul, in 2 Thessalonians ii. *et seq.*, only speaks of Antichrist as the spiritual seducer, not as a civil ruler and cruel tyrant. This becomes easily intelligible if the usurper and the prophet of lies are only two different sides of one and the same person. It becomes inexplicable, however, if the false prophet is a person by himself, and that merely a person subordinate to the real Antichrist, the ruler of the world; for then the apostle would only have mentioned the subordinate person and passed by the main person, which is hardly probable, since his whole account of him bears unmistakably the stamp of being a sketch of the actual Antichrist (consequently the main person, on his one side, as the seducer of the people). But in any circumstances there is perfect fidelity to truth in this account in the Revelation of an antichristian double personality. There certainly can be no doubt that Antichrist, in support of his sovereignty over mankind, will take into his service every spiritual power that is hostile to God ("the spirit of the age," philosophy and culture in their more and more heathen form, spiritualism and belief in the magical, etc.), and fill them all with his satanic powers.

Finally, it is only in Daniel and in the Revelation that we learn anything concerning the duration of the sway of Antichrist. We have earlier shown that the period of his real supremacy is represented as $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, yet so that a preparatory period of the same duration seems to precede the actual reign—therefore a whole week of years (7 years). That this number is to be taken quite literally, it would be rather venturesome to assert dogmatically (*vide* p. 259). In any case, it will only be “a short space” (Rev. xvii. 10).

The figurative representation of Antichrist in the Revelation bristles with difficulties for expositors, and space does not permit us to discuss them further here. Yet there are two points upon which we must at least briefly touch.

In Revelation xiii. 3 it is said that one of the heads of the beast was wounded to death, as it were, but was healed again. There can scarcely be any doubt that that head is Antichrist himself. It may, however, be asked: Is not the whole beast Antichrist? Yes, in a certain sense that is so. But in another sense, all earthly power that is hostile to God, that is moved and ruled by antichristian thoughts, is the beast. On this beast Antichrist is the last and greatest head, the one through whom this hostile power reaches its full maturity,—he is, so to speak, an embodiment of the whole conception of the beast. Therefore the seer may summarily designate him as the beast, and he does so frequently, even if in ver. 3, with perfect reason, he causes him to appear as one of its heads. He is actually the seventh head of the beast, but he occupies such a prominent position in its organism that he may also with truth be called the beast itself, and this will become still more plain to us when we further regard the remarkable words in Revelation xvii. 11.

Consequently, Antichrist received a deadly wound, but the wound was healed, healed in such a strange way that by his very contemporaries the cure was regarded as one of the wonders which to an essential degree led men to worship him (Rev. xiii. 4–13).

In this some have seen no more than that the kingdom of Antichrist received a shock so great that it seemed doomed to destruction; but, contrary to all expectation, and to the

surprise of all, it rose up again and became still mightier than before. Now, since Antichrist here means one of the heads, as distinct from the beast itself, it is undoubtedly very natural to think of the person of Antichrist himself. He received a wound which to all seemed to be quite deadly; but yet the wound was healed—by the aid of nature or satanic forces.¹ And this seems to have been regarded, by all who saw it or heard of it, as a wonder that happened in his own person and by his own miraculous power. Therefore the divine worship which was offered to him is mentioned immediately after the account of this wonderful healing (ver. 4). Thenceforth his power increased so that it soon became irresistible, and along with his power increased his audacious and scornful defiance of God, his distinct demand for worship, and his cruel persecution of all who ventured to refuse the homage he desired (Rev. xiii. 5–8).

We have already referred to Revelation xvii. 11 as a passage which supports the view here set forth. It is there said: "The beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven." That these heads signify the various forms of the world-kingdom throughout the ages, or in other words, several successive world-kingdoms, with their rulers, is quite evident. In the immediately preceding verse it is said that five of them (the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Græco-Macedonian) already belonged to the past, whilst the sixth still (in the time of John) continued (the Roman kingdom with its tributaries, which yet continues, and will continue until the time of Antichrist). The seventh is to come, and will only "continue a short space" ($3\frac{1}{2}$ years). This seventh is manifestly Antichrist and his kingdom. But in verse 11 he is called the beast ("the beast . . . is of the seven"), although in reality he is only its seventh head. This last head so unites in itself the whole nature of the beast (all its impious thoughts, all its rebellious and heaven-storming efforts) that it can be used instead of the whole beast, *i.e.* the world-power hostile to God from begin-

¹ That this was a real wound inflicted on the body of Antichrist (*e.g.* by a blow) seems to follow even more plainly from the expression in verse 14, "the wound by a sword."

ning to end. That which first in its head, Antichrist, appears in fully developed form "is the eighth" (R.V., "an eighth") "and is of the seven." What does this mean? Do we not here have an indication that the period of Antichrist falls into two parts, divided by the deadly wound? In the first part—until he receives the mortal wound—he is the seventh; but as the one who again in a strange way is healed, and, as it were, rises from the dead, he is the eighth, although one of the seven. His real time of supremacy falls into the second portion. As the one brought back from death to life (by the devil's power), he is completely possessed by the devil (xiii. 4–17), wherefore it is also said of this second appearance of his that he ascends out of the bottomless pit (xvii. 8), not merely from the ocean of humanity as when he rose the first time (xiii. 1). His supremacy from henceforth has its roots in the demoniacal and not merely in the human hostility to God.

By the supposition of such a double appearance (before and after the deadly wound) we get an explanation of the mysterious words in xvii. 8: the beast that thou sawest was (first appearance) and is not (the interval when its head, which is identical with the beast itself, lay wounded to death); and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit (the second appearance after the deadly wound was healed, a kind of resurrection from the dead, an imitation and a caricature of Christ's resurrection).¹

In the Revelation also, as in Paul, there are indications that Antichrist will imitate Christ. The first beast was "as

¹ The expositors who refer the wound not to a person but to a kingdom appear to us to involve themselves in difficulties which scarcely allow the words of the text their due. Thus Auberlen, by the seventh head, understands Christianity between the Roman kingdom (the sixth) and the kingdom of Antichrist (which therefore is the eighth). In Christianity the antichristian thoughts receive a deadly wound; but this will be healed again when the kingdom of Antichrist begins (*Der Proph. D. und d. Off. Joh.*, pp. 342 *et seq.*, 2nd ed.). Then Antichrist (or his kingdom) might be called the "eighth," but not likewise "one of the seven." Others suppose that the wound was the wound that the power of the devil received by the death of Jesus, but these generally explain away the whole doctrine of Antichrist. There are various other views on the subject, but they hardly deserve mention.

it were wounded to death" (Rev. xiii. 3). The word used in the original for "wounded" here is the same as that used in reference to the "slain" Lamb of God in Revelation v. 6. And as the Lamb of God (Christ), after having been slain, came to life again (rose from the dead), so also this beast revived after the deadly wound in its head. Indeed, we can carry the comparison still further; for as this resurrection of Christ had the effect that soon thousands came to believe on Him, so also the healing of the wound seems to have had the result that crowds flocked to the beast ("all the world wondered after the beast," xiii. 3). And again, when the second beast is said to have "horns like a lamb" (xiii. 11), there is implied in the expression an unmistakable indication that in its form and conduct it sought to imitate the Lamb of God.

Finally, it has been asked: Where will Antichrist first appear, and what will be the extent of his kingdom?

To these no definite answers can be given. Many of the ancients thought that Antichrist would arise among the Jews (possibly from the tribe of Dan, which is left out in the enumeration of the sealed in Rev. vii.), and would first secure a following among them; and some recent scholars (*e.g.* Godet) have suggested that he will be one of those unbelieving modern Jews who have given up the faith of their fathers, and yet are distinguished for their consuming hatred to Christ and everything Christian. There is, however, no ground whatever for coming to such a conclusion, since Scripture gives us no information on the subject. On the contrary, everything seems to show that he will spring from and belong to a world-nation. The Jews have never formed any world-empire, and have no prospect of ever forming such a power. But Antichrist will arise from a world-empire, and will lead the world to its highest point. He will, above all, be a ruler of the world, and his prophetic rôle will only have a subordinate significance, although it is mainly in the latter character that the Jews might be expected to accept and favour him (especially if he were to begin by putting on the mask of a false Messiah).

As for the extent of his dominion, this will certainly

first and foremost embrace Christendom, where he will "make war with the saints and overcome them" (Rev. xiii. 7); but it seems next to refer to all mankind (*cf.* xiii. 8, "all that dwell upon the earth"). However, it is doubtful whether it will extend beyond the bounds of the civilized world, which in reality is usually all that is understood in Scripture, even when the words employed seem to include all mankind. Only thus is it possible to explain how his kingdom can perish without mankind also ceasing to exist, and how even after the millennial kingdom there may be nations enough ready to be deceived by the devil once more let loose (Rev. xx. 7, 8).

NOTE I

Since in the Revelation so much is "figurative language," and even the section about Antichrist is so full of images that the actual substance must be wrested, so to speak, from these, some will possibly say, What importance can really be attached to such language?

Now, it is true that we must deal cautiously with figurative language, and that we must not press every separate utterance as in an ordinary logical argument. But it does not therefore follow that what is figuratively stated is without any substantial meaning. On the contrary, every figure must be a figure of something, otherwise it would be a meaningless beating of the air. The task of the expositor is to extract from the figure the thought that underlies it. And it does not seem to be very difficult to find this thought here. Thus when the beast makes its appearance speaking and acting as a man, it must surely also be the figure of a man. And when it subjects and rules over all people, the man thus delineated must be a ruler of the world. When, moreover, it acts very violently, makes war upon the saints, says blasphemous things, and so on, then this man must be the most ungodly among the ungodly. The main idea is therefore not so very difficult to lay hold of. There is certainly much more difficulty in understanding the subordinate thoughts, as, for example, "the mark of the beast," "the number of its name," etc. (Rev. xiii. 16-18). Here we can only make assumptions regarding what is intended; we cannot speak with confidence (*cf.* hereon pp. 236-41 and 258, 259).

NOTE II *

By careful consideration of the testimony of Scripture we have in the preceding pages come to the conclusion that Antichrist is a definite human personality, who will appear upon the earth immediately before the Lord's

* Where we have not had access to the originals, we have, in the historical section of this note, mainly made use of Professor Lücke's well-known and erudite work, *Versuch ein. voll. Einleitung in die Offenb. des Joh.*, 2nd ed., Bonn, 1852, pp. 950-1070.

second advent. But this has been so much disputed, and opinions regarding it have been so numerous, that we have not been altogether able to avoid paying some attention to divergent views, especially since one of them (the view that the pope is Antichrist) has been so general in the Lutheran Church that it has even found its way into one of its symbolical books, a book, however, which has not much weight with us in Norway.

Amid the utter confusion of differing opinions bearing on this subject, it is difficult to obtain a clear survey of them. But we will make an attempt. The opinions may be divided into these three groups:—

1. There are those who think that expressions such as “Antichrist,” “the man of sin,” and the figures of beasts in Daniel and in the Revelation, merely designate the antichristian spirit (hostility to Christ and to God) which manifests itself in the opposition of the world to God and His kingdom through the whole history of that kingdom, an opposition sometimes weaker, sometimes stronger, but strongest towards the end of time.

2. Others concede that, according to Scripture, Antichrist cannot be merely such an abstract idea—the passages must be regarded so that they treat of actual persons, and not only of the ungodly “spirit of the age.” But that, they say, does not necessarily imply some individual person; it might well be a succession of persons of a definite kind, consequently a collective conception. In days of old there were some who were disposed to find this in the Roman emperors who persecuted Christianity; but in the old Lutheran Church it was general to seek it in the papacy. Therefore the popes succeeding each other, regarded as a unity, one moral personality, would be Antichrist.

3. But the most general opinion, both in the Ancient Church and among Lutheran theologians of modern times, is that here there is reference to some particular person, even if this one (the real Antichrist) may have had many precursors and types in history (antichristian men, Antichrists in a figurative and typical sense). That this is the view of Scripture we have endeavoured to show, and its evidence is conclusive enough. That also is the view which the Ancient Church read out of Scripture. It is undoubtedly of great significance in this respect, that we find it clearly expressed in the *Didache* (“The teaching of the Twelve Apostles”), where it is said of the last days: “Then will the deceiver of the world be revealed as the Son of God, and show signs and wonders, and the earth will be given into his hands and he will do infamous things, such as have never been done before from all eternity,” chapter xvi. This is entitled to all the more weight since its composition dates from a period so close to the age of the apostles* that it must be regarded as a tolerably trustworthy expression of the apostolic tradition. This view is supported by Irenæus, who likewise regards Antichrist as some particular person, concerning whose character and future conduct he speaks with some detail in his book

* Concerning the character and date of composition of this wonderful document, constant discussion has been going on since it was discovered (in 1875) and published (in 1883); and what has been written on the subject now amounts to a perfect literature. Generally speaking, it seems to be agreed that it was written in the first half of the second century after Christ. *Vide* especially the exhaustive introduction in Harnack's edition of the original (Leipzig, 1886). Caspari supposed it was composed before 120 A.D. [*Luth. Ugeskrift*, pp. 400 *et seq.* (1884)].

Against Heretics (V. chaps. xxv.—xxx.), where he appeals to Daniel, Paul, and the Revelation in corroboration, and he also holds that Christ Himself is referring to Antichrist when he says: "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43). Such also was the view of others of the Fathers of the Ancient Church, until Origen and his school began to explain away the words of Scripture under the fair name of expounding everything "spiritually."

In the Middle Ages, when, as a rule, less attention was paid to Scripture, there was little reference to these things, and in the Church, both of the East and of the West, men allowed themselves to be talked out of the literal understanding of the predictions regarding the time of the end, although the view of the Ancient Church concerning Antichrist held out tenaciously at this period. Practically only the sects troubled themselves about the prophecies, when they sighed under the persecutions of the Roman Church, and longed for the end of the world; and they naturally devoted considerable attention to the passages of Scripture bearing on that subject. As a rule, they saw Antichrist in the pope, and the Reformers supported this view, for even in a symbolic document the pope is designated "the real Antichrist" (*Schm.*, Art. ii. 4). This view became the general one in the old Lutheran Church, where exegesis unfortunately was greatly influenced by dogmatics and creeds, and by "the history of the time" (here hostility to the papacy). For much the same reasons, this view of Antichrist held its ground within "Orthodox Lutherdom" on both sides of the Atlantic right into the present century. But through the more thorough study of Scripture in our own day this view is gradually being given up, and is now held by comparatively few theologians of any standing within the Lutheran Church. They are more and more beginning to acknowledge that the relative passages of Scripture must be understood of some definite person who will appear at the time of the end. On the other hand, the view that the Roman pontiff is Antichrist is still prevalent in the Reformed Church in England, Scotland, and America.

But even amongst those who consider Antichrist to be some particular person, there has been great diversity as to who this person is. Here, again, opinions diverge from each other into three groups.

There are some who hold that this person has already come, and, in accordance with their different conception of the Book of Revelation, on the whole, they have pointed to men like Nero, Julian the Apostate, Mahomet, or Napoleon (some Catholics point to Luther) as the actual Antichrist.

Others have even admitted that Antichrist is a historic personage who has once appeared, but, at the same time, they maintain that he is still to come; in other words, they have thought that he is a historical person who, during his earthly life, has been a terrible opponent of God and His kingdom, and who will rise from the dead and come again as Antichrist. During his first earthly existence he has therefore been a precursor of Antichrist; at his return he will become the real Antichrist.

As is well known, many of the early Christians held this belief regarding their cruel persecutor, the Emperor Nero, who, they thought, did not really die, but retired into concealment to the east of the Euphrates, in order, in due time, to return as Antichrist. When Napoleon I. became a scourge to the whole of Europe, there were many who were inclined to see Antichrist in him. When, however, the result showed that this was erroneous,—he was certainly not destroyed at the Lord's advent, but by the united armies of Europe,—many have latterly begun to think that he will come again as Antichrist. Finally,

as has already been mentioned, Hofmann is of opinion that it is Antiochus Epiphanes who will rise from the dead and come again as Antichrist at the time of the end. Possibly there are writers within this group who find Antichrist in some person other than those specified, a person who will therefore have a double life upon the earth. Any satisfactory Biblical foundation for such a view, however, none of them has yet been able to produce. They have only been able to appeal to such passages as 2 Thessalonians ii. 6, that Antichrist in due time will be revealed, which, they say, assumes that he already previously has existed. But the explanation of the expression is only that Antichrist is to be represented as the one who will imitate Christ, and will therefore also give himself the semblance of having had a previous existence.

And then we have a third group, viz., those who in Antichrist merely see some particular person who will appear towards the end of time and play the *rôle* which in Scripture is attributed to him as the great leader of the last bitter conflict against the kingdom of God before the Lord's advent, but without implying that such a leader is some earlier deceased historical personage. With this group we unconditionally agree. Their conception is the only one which rests on a scriptural basis, and gives to the prophetic words which we have recently been considering their full due.

Of the views referred to, the only one which deserves an answer is the old "Lutheran" one that the pope is Antichrist.

As already pointed out, this view was set forth in the Smalcald Articles, which is a Lutheran symbol, even if it has no binding authority over us.* This certainly gives it an importance which renders it necessary for us to indicate still more clearly its untenability.

It is undoubted that there both has been and is much that is antichristian in the Roman Church, and especially in its papacy; but this merely shows that the antichristian spirit is at work in the world long before the real Antichrist appears, yea, that in all ages it has been at work. But that some of the features of Antichrist are recognised in the papacy is not enough to entitle us to designate it as Antichrist. The monkey has some similarity to man without therefore being man; for it lacks some of man's essential characteristics. Thus the question here is not by any means whether the papacy has some resemblance to Antichrist—which we have no desire to deny—but whether it has actually all his essential characteristics, and that we deny. Let us establish this position.

(a) Antichrist is evidently, according to Scripture, some particular person. He is "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," "the lawless one" (2 Thess. ii. 3-8). Even in John's Epistles, where there is mention of several Antichrists who had already come, it is expressly said of the Antichrist (in the singular), that he will come. In Daniel and in the Revelation the personality undoubtedly is hidden to some extent under the figures of the beast-forms; but even there it occasionally manifests itself sufficiently clearly. Such is the case in Revelation xix. 20, where it is said of Antichrist and his subordinate ("the false prophet") that both of them (in the masculine, whilst "the beast," even in the

* In the Norwegian Church, the confessional documents (in addition to the three Creeds which we have in common with the whole Church, Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian) are only the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Little Catechism.

original, is neuter) were cast "into a lake of fire." Here there is evident reference to a particular person.

The papacy, on the contrary, as a form of Church government, is an abstract conception, and as an expression for persons (the popes) a collective conception. Consequently, the Antichrist of Scripture cannot be the papacy in any of its two significations.

(b) The Old Testament prototype of Antichrist (Antiochus Epiphanes) was a particular person, and so was his New Testament antitype (Christ); and from this itself it seems to follow that Antichrist must also be so, but in that case he cannot be the collected sum of all the popes.

(c) Antichrist will make himself out to be God; but that no pope has done. The pope has only claimed to be called the deputy of Christ (*Vicarius Christi*), and therefore derived all his authority from Christ (through the Apostle Peter).

(d) Antichrist will perform wonders by the aid of the devil. This cannot be said of any pope. The popes, as such, may be said never to have pretended to be wonder-workers.

(e) Nor can it be said that any pope has ever established any world-empire embracing all people, as Antichrist will do; even although some popes (such as Gregory VII. and Innocent III.) have had a strong inclination to attempt it.

(f) Antichrist will abolish all worship of God (Dan. viii. 11; 2 Thess. ii. 4). There is therefore no hint that anyone who belongs to his kingdom and submits to his will, can continue to be a Christian. But when have the popes forbidden the worship of God? And who will venture to deny that even under the papacy there both have been and still are many true Christians? The Lutheran Church has, at any rate, never denied this, and so in this matter it has been far from consistent.

(g) Finally, it must be observed that in the prophecies relating to Antichrist it is almost everywhere maintained that he will appear in the latter days, immediately before the Lord's advent (Dan. viii. 17; 2 Thess. ii. 8; Rev. xix. 11), and he will have sway only for "a short space" (Rev. xvii. 10). But the papacy came very early indeed, and has already held sway during nearly three-fourths of the Church's history. This alone should be an incontrovertible argument against the contention that the papacy is Antichrist.

We may admit that the papacy is antichristian, but that it is Antichrist we must deny, even although Luther has said it. It is now time for Lutherans to break away from such untenable views, which only depend upon dogmatic traditions from the infancy of biblical exegesis.

2. THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

We now come to a series of events which occupy a characteristic position in prophecy. What we have formerly treated of has for the most part found support from predictions in several of the books of the Bible, but we are now face to face with something which the Book of Revelation alone unfolds to us. However, that is not a reason for doubting its truth and trustworthiness. If that book is

the Word of God, its simple witness is sufficient. We are to accept the Word of God, and it is nowhere said that a thing must be repeated in several passages and in different books and forms before we are to believe it. A desire for repetition savours of the doubt which led Moses to think that he must smite the rock twice before it would yield water, a lack of faith which the Lord punished by denying him entrance to the Promised Land (Num. xx. 11, 12).¹ He who sets some word of God aside will certainly not be listened to when he makes the excuse that that word only once appeared.

The events which group themselves under the title "The Millennial Kingdom" are mainly three: the binding of the devil, the first resurrection, and the millennium itself, of which the first and second prepare for the third, and are conditions of its coming.

Both by the Prophet Daniel and by the Apostle Paul it is, as we have already seen, clearly enough hinted that it is the coming of the Lord in person that will destroy Antichrist (Dan. vii. 13, 26; 2 Thess. ii. 8); and in our survey of the Revelation we have noticed that the same thought has there received a still more definite expression (pp. 263, 264). After internal divisions and divine punishments have partially destroyed the kingdom of Antichrist, comes "the rider on the white horse," on whose thigh is the legend, *King of kings and Lord of lords*, who cuts down his hosts, attacks Antichrist himself ("the beast and the false prophet"), casts him into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 11-21), and thus fulfils in him both the direct words of the prophecy, "the beast goeth into perdition" (Rev. xvii. 11), and the omen that lay in his name, "the son of perdition" (2 Thess. ii. 3).

But the actual author of Antichrist, the one who con-jured him forth, and all the time stood behind him, helped him, and gave to him his powers, was the dragon, *i.e.* Satan

¹ Of course we do not mean to deny that other reasons than the double blow (*e.g.*, the impatience and impetuosity by which Moses allowed himself to be hurried) may have had their share in bringing this punishment upon him.

himself (2 Thess. ii. 9 ; Rev. xiii. 2) ; and it is now his turn. Now Antichrist has for ever played out his part, and therefore can at once receive his final doom ; but Satan still receives liberty to do something on the earth (Rev. xx. 7-10). Consequently he is not yet eternally relegated to the bottomless pit, but is only kept there in chains for a time, a part of the time in which he awaits "the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6), a day which only dawns when the millennial kingdom has come to a close ; then for the first time has the devil his final place appointed to him, where the beast and the false prophet already are (Rev. xx. 10).

John now saw an angel, with a great chain in his hand, come down from heaven, lay hold of the dragon, bind him for a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, shut up the mouth of the pit and seal it, "that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. xx. 1-3).

What are we to understand by this incarceration of the devil for a thousand years ?

Many have thought it only means that his power and influence on earth will for a time be checked. He is certainly "bound," they say, but with such a long chain that he can still go about among men, even although his free movement is limited by the length of his fetter, after the manner of a goat tethered to a stake. Now, how does this agree with the words of our text ? The bottomless pit, into which he is cast, was closed and sealed over him for a thousand years. How then can he during this period still wander about on earth ? Even supposing that it is all a figure (for the reference is to a spirit to whom chains and seals are not literally applicable), yet the figure must express something which corresponds to it, and this can only be that during that time he is absolutely shut off from the earth and those living there ; and this seems to be demanded by the words : "He should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled."

Of course, it does not consequently follow that all sin and temptation will thereby be removed. If there still remain sinful men upon the earth, the apostle's words will

remain true: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. i. 14). But from the fiery darts of the devil (Ephes. vi. 16) men are free, and that is no small relief.

On this imprisonment of the devil follows the first resurrection. The great enemy of the Church militant has been removed, and now the heirs of the kingdom of glory come upon the scene. The section which here begins (Rev. xx. 4-6) is one of the most difficult in the whole Bible, and we can only attempt to give an account of its contents. Here wisdom from above is required, and we must pray the Lord to vouchsafe us such wisdom, through the Spirit, as shall lead us into all truth.

John sees thrones set up, and "they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them" (xx. 4). Who are they who sat upon these thrones? And in what sense is it said of them that judgment was given unto them?

The judgment which is held cannot be the Last Judgment; for that only begins in verse 11. Many have thought that the judgment referred to is a decision regarding those who will share in the first resurrection. But if such is to be the case, who will be the judges? Not Christ; for they are many, whilst He is only one. It has been conjectured that the judges are the twenty-four elders; but these are only ideal representatives of the Churches of the two covenants, whilst here there is evident reference to actual persons. Others have pointed to the twelve apostles, who, according to the words of Christ Himself, "shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). But that prediction aims at the Last Judgment, and has nothing to do with this passage. Besides, even this passage in Matthew represents Christ Himself as the actual judge, and the apostles only as assessors. But here those who sat upon the thrones are alone represented as judging. Others have supposed that they to whom judgment was given were angels. But that the angels should act as judges is a thought quite foreign to the whole of Scripture. Christ is everywhere the actual Judge, but His elect are also with Him as judges,—first, the apostles (Matt. xix. 28), and then

all believers; for of them all it is said that they shall judge the world, and judge the angels too (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3); whilst these latter, on the other hand, are merely "ministering spirits" (Heb. i. 14), both in the history of salvation and at the judgment, where they only carry out the sentences of the Lord upon the ungodly (Matt. xiii. 41, 42; *cf.* xxii. 13).

We must therefore look about for some other explanation. It has been supposed, and probably justly, that the solution will be found in the double meaning of the word "judge." For the word in Scripture means sometimes to pass a judgment, sometimes to rule, to exercise royal power. Thus it is frequently said in the Book of Judges, that this or that judge "judged Israel" for so many years, which means that during that period he was ruler over them (Judg. iii. 10, x. 2, xii. 7, xv. 20; *cf.* also 1 Sam. viii. 5; Ps. lxvii. 4). If the word is regarded in this latter sense in the passage under consideration all difficulties on this point disappear. The apostle then sees a great host, those who are permitted to share in the dominion with Christ.¹ Nor is it necessary to ask over whom they will then rule; for after the Last Judgment the elect will rule with Christ to all eternity (Rev. xxii. 5), although there may be no reference to any who will be governed by them, any "subjects" in heaven over whom they will rule. It merely denotes that they enjoy a glory, power, and honour with God that can only be compared with a king's.

In what relation do these words stand to what follows? Probably the line of thought is this. When the apostle sees this multitude he quite naturally inquires of himself, Whence come they who sit upon the thrones?² To this he receives the answer in the part of the vision which follows. They were the souls of them that had been beheaded for their adherence to Jesus (consequently, the martyrs), and of them

¹ With this agrees also Daniel vii. 22, where it is said of God's people after the fall of Antichrist, that they "possessed the kingdom."

² With this may be compared the angel's question and answer in Revelation vii. 13, 14: "What are these? and whence come they? These are they which came out of great tribulation."

"which had not worshipped the beast neither his image." What follows, therefore, is merely further information concerning those who sat upon the thrones, and to whom judgment was given, *i.e.* who ruled (with Christ).

Let us now consider closely what happens to these. All that is said concerning them is that "they lived," and that "they reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4).

What is implied when it is said that "they lived"? Is it a spiritual or a bodily quickening? They who seek to explain away the whole millennial kingdom, or who "regard it spiritually" (*i.e.* see in it merely a spiritual revival of the Church in the last times), are almost compelled to understand the word "making alive, quickening," of the awakening to life in God of a soul that is dead in sin. That the expression *per se* may mean this we do not dispute, for it is frequently used in such a sense (*vide, e.g.*, Luke xv. 32; Eph. ii. 5, v. 14; John vi. 63). But is such a significance possible here? To this we must answer decidedly, No; and for the following reasons:—

1. The whole connection shows that there is no reference here to anything that is to happen to sleeping sinners, but to something that will be experienced by the martyrs who had fallen asleep, who already had sealed their testimony with their blood, and by such constant confessors as had remained faithful to the Lord even in the grievous time of persecution under Antichrist. What meaning would there be in saying that such believers were now for the first time aroused from spiritual death?

2. The quickening of these is contrasted with their earlier death; but this was a corporeal death (martyrdom), and their quickening must likewise concern the body.

3. This coming to life is called in verses 5–16 a "resurrection," the first resurrection; it is therefore compared with the second and general resurrection, which is not mentioned until verse 12, and which is certainly a resurrection of the body. Naturally, this first resurrection must also be a resurrection of the body, otherwise the comparison becomes meaningless.

Through the conviction that this explanation is impossible

others, who, however, reluctantly confess that there is reference here to an actual resurrection of the body, have attempted to satisfy themselves by supposing that in this passage we have only a figure implying that in the latter days there will be men who resemble the martyrs in spirit and power; thus the martyrs, figuratively speaking, rise from the dead in these new witnesses, in the same way that Elijah is said to have come again in John the Baptist, so that he is at once called Elijah (Matt. xvii. 10-13). This view was somewhat more reasonable than the former one; but yet it is quite invalidated by the arguments set forth under 2 and 3.

We must therefore adhere to the strict meaning of the words, viz., that here there is actually implied a resurrection of bodies which will precede the last and general resurrection. When the supporters of one or other of the two previously-mentioned views raise the objection to this, that, according to Revelation xx. 4, it is the souls of the martyred that are to be quickened, and that naturally there can be no reference to a resurrection of the body in the ordinary sense, the objection they make is based upon a misunderstanding of the Biblical use of the terms. For the word "soul" is frequently used in the Bible to signify "person," a conception for which in Biblical usage there is no special expression. We have abundance of examples of this. Thus we read: "When any" (*soul* in the Hebrew) "will offer a meat offering unto the Lord" (Lev. ii. 1); "He that killeth any man" (Hebrew, *soul*) "shall surely be put to death" (Lev. xxiv. 17); "Whosoever hath killed any person" (Hebrew, *soul*) (Num. xxxi. 19; also xxxv. 11, 15); "If a man be found stealing any" (Hebrew, *soul*) "of his brethren" (Deut. xxiv. 7). And in the New Testament this usage is not unknown, especially in books whose method of expression has such an Old Testament colouring as the Revelation. Thus it is said that "eight souls" (meaning persons) were saved with Noah in the ark (1 Peter iii. 20). And in Revelation xviii. 13, "souls of men" (*i.e.* human beings; *cf.* Ezek. xxvii. 13) are reckoned among the articles in which Babylon traded.

We have thus, we think, sufficiently shown the weakness

of the objection that there is no reference here to a resurrection of the body, because only "souls" are mentioned. It is the whole person (soul = person) which rises up, is quickened, but according to its bodily part, since it is that part, and not the soul, which at death dies.

And now, who are they that are to participate in this first resurrection? Here there is mention only of the martyrs (literally, those put to death with the axe),¹ and of such as have not become martyrs in an actual sense, yet have passed through the tribulation of the antichristian time without yielding to the beast and receiving his mark. But are these the only ones? To this some answer, Yes; whilst others suppose that the best of the deceased Christians of all ages will share in that resurrection. There are many who think that all true Christians who have died will share in it. Some even think that the then surviving true believers will be included in this multitude in such a way that these "shall all be changed in a moment." This change, so far as they are concerned, will take the place of death and resurrection, since it will transform their earthly and corruptible body into a heavenly and incorruptible body.

The first view might seem to be supported by the wording of the passage, since only these two classes are expressly mentioned in verse 4. In favour of the second there is nothing else to be adduced except the unreasonableness which seems to lie in confining this distinction only to the believing Christians of the antichristian time. For it cannot be denied that in the different ages of the Church there have lived great numbers of Christians who have done far more for the kingdom of God than many of these (we need only think of men like Augustine and Luther), and who undoubtedly would have sealed their testimony at the stake if that had been required of them. It was not their fault that they lived in an age when there were no martyrdoms, and it seems unreasonable that this fact should exclude them from the distinction of participating in the glory of the first resurrection.

It cannot be denied that these arguments have con-

¹ This, too, some understand only of the martyrs at the time of Antichrist.

siderable weight. But this regard for probability leads even further. Is it probable, one might ask, that the Lord will come again in person to the earth without translating all His followers from death to life? We cannot harmonize this with our conceptions of the ways of the Lord.

However, it is not the greater or smaller probability which is here decisive, but the Word of God. The question is therefore, whether there is any declaration in Scripture on which we can base our hope that all true believers will be permitted to share in the first resurrection.

We believe we have such a passage; indeed, there are several which point in the same direction.

Our Saviour's own words about "the resurrection of the just" (Luke xiv. 14) seem to indicate that a resurrection is coming in which only the just will share, but all of them will share in it. It is possibly this that Paul refers to when he speaks of labouring and striving outwardly and inwardly in the hope that he might "attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. iii. 8-11). What else can he here mean but sharing in "the resurrection of the just," in other words, being saved? Consequently it is the same as when he speaks of endeavouring to live faithfully lest when he had preached to others he himself "should be a castaway" (1 Cor. ix. 27). He seems therefore to think that being saved and being permitted to share in this resurrection are one and the same thing. But then he must have assumed that all in his day who were to be saved would share in it. Or was he thinking of the general resurrection? No, this seems impossible; for he knew from the Lord's own words (John v. 28, 29) that all would rise again, however they had lived, and therefore no striving on his part was needed that he might share in it. Or may he have thought that he would live to see the resurrection? But even that would not depend on his growth in grace, but only on the time of his death and of his Lord's coming. Besides, the reason which, in Philippians iii. 8-11, he gives for this wish and hope of his does not suit this thought.¹

¹ Some on purely linguistic grounds have supposed that Paul must here be speaking of an extraordinary resurrection, since he both employs an unusual

Another noteworthy passage is 1 Corinthians xv. 23, 24 : " Christ the firstfruits ; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end," etc. It is of the resurrection that the apostle here speaks. This he sets forth in three separate stages. First there is Christ's own resurrection, which is the firm foundation for the whole doctrine of the resurrection. Then comes the resurrection of those who belong to Christ when He returns. This seems to include all true Christians, both those who are dead when He comes and they who are still alive, and who will be changed when the trumpet sounds

word for resurrection (*ἐξάνδρασις* instead of *ἀνδρασις*, which is the usual word), and speaks of " resurrection from the dead " (*i.e.* a resurrection of a portion from amongst the great multitude of the dead, who are consequently left, they say), and not of " the resurrection of the dead " (*i.e.* of all the dead).

However, we dare not attribute much weight to this. The peculiar expression *ἐξάνδρασις* occurs only in this place in the New Testament, and very rarely in classic Greek ; but the corresponding verb *ἐξανίστημι*, from which it is derived, is of frequent occurrence and hardly seems to differ in meaning from *ἀνίστημι*, from which the usual word for resurrection (*ἀνδρασις*) is formed. And so far as concerns " the resurrection from the dead," it appears from such passages as, *e.g.* Acts iv. 2, that this very expression is employed of the general resurrection of all the dead (consequently, the resurrection of the dead). But yet the whole trend of the apostle's argument leads the thought to " the resurrection of the just." This has been admitted from the earliest Church times. The old Greek exegete Theophylact himself, in his exposition of this chapter, writes : " By the resurrection, in this passage, I understand that joyful rising in which the dead in Christ will be caught up in the clouds. All will doubtless rise again, but not all will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air ; upon the earth many will await the coming of the Judge. But the saints will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air " (1 Thess. iv. 17). He next points out how modest the apostle is, since he does not regard it as quite certain that he himself will be amongst these, and shows how well this harmonizes with his words of admonition in another passage : " Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall " (1 Cor. x. 12). It is therefore clear that even Theophylact understands the apostle's words here as referring to resurrection to life, " the resurrection of the just," the resurrection of all who are saved (*i.e.* provided that their earthly life is not subsequent to His coming). And that is really the only view which agrees with the apostle's whole line of thought in this passage ; for if we read Philipians iii. 8-11, we at once see that everything on which the apostle grounds his hope of sharing in this resurrection is necessary for salvation, for being saved (" win Christ," " the righteousness which is of God by faith "). There is no mention of any extraordinary perfection which was not, strictly speaking, necessary for salvation, but was only a condition necessary for sharing in an extraordinary honour in which very few were elected to participate.

(1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). This can only be "the resurrection of the just," and in that all will participate who really belong to the Lord when He comes. The resurrection of the ungodly he does not include; indeed, he does not speak of it at all.¹ Why? Probably because that resurrection does not belong to the end; for "then cometh the end," he says, and to this end belongs the general resurrection which, according to the Revelation, only comes afterward (Rev. xx. 12-15).

It seems, therefore, as if Paul had known of this double resurrection, and regarded it as certain that all believers will participate in the first. Of the interval between the two (or, as Paul puts it, between the resurrection of those who "are Christ's at His coming" and "the end"), which in the Revelation is filled up by the millennial kingdom, he does not speak further.

With this passage we may connect 1 Thess. iv. 13-17. What the apostle here wishes to show is that those already dead at the Lord's coming will not miss any of the honour and glory which believers then alive will enjoy; both will have the same advantages. When the Lord comes and the trumpet sounds, "the dead in Christ" will first arise, then the living believers will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord, and then they will all ever be with the Lord. Here we learn that all they who belong to the Lord will be gathered to Him when He comes. There is no mention here of the resurrection of the ungodly, nor even of a judgment. Is this not due to the fact that the time for these two events has not yet arrived? They will first come to pass after "the thousand years." But the judgment which then follows has no significance for those already saved and glorified. It will be no real interruption of their life in glory, and so the apostle can close by saying that now they will henceforth ever be with the Lord (ver. 17).

¹ There have been some who have thought that this is because Paul does not know of any other resurrection than that of the just. But they must have forgotten his own words in Acts xxiv. 15: "I have hope towards God . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Cf. John v. 28, 29.

According to these, as it seems to us, tolerably clear indications in the Word of God, we must assume that all true believers—dead or alive—at the Lord's return for judgment upon Antichrist, will participate in the first resurrection. Although the Revelation only mentions the martyrs (*i.e.* those martyred during this last period) and the faithful believers during the antichristian era of persecution, that is due to the fact that the main purpose of the Lord's coming was to deliver His Church from this tribulation, and consequently it was very natural to refer more particularly to them.¹

¹ A somewhat strange view of the first resurrection, under the name of the "gradual resurrection," has received currency from some expositors. They understand by that term that, from the moment of Christ's resurrection onward, a resurrection of certain elect believers is constantly going on and will continue up to the time of the end. Some so connect this thought with the passage under our consideration that they believe the resurrection which is here mentioned to be the cope-stone of the gradual resurrection. They have endeavoured to get support for their theory from some of the old Church Fathers, but it is very doubtful whether they have succeeded. Irenæus has been referred to (*e.g.*, by Mühe), but no passage from his writings is quoted, and we certainly have not been able to find any. Reference has also been made to Tertullian. But he merely says that within the period of the millennial kingdom itself there will be a gradual resurrection, since some rise earlier, others later, according to their merits ("pro meritis maturius vel tardius"; *Adv. Marc.*, ii. 24). Not only does he not believe in any resurrection of the individual shortly after death, but he even, in another place (*De resur.*, chap. xxii.), mocks at those Animalists (the Valentinians) who hold that the resurrection may take place immediately after death ("Ab excessu statim vitæ"), and inquires: "Who else but the heretic has hitherto risen again?" And appeal has also been made to Ambrose; but what Ambrose in his book *On Faith* says on this subject is only this, that when the resurrection comes all the dead will arise almost contemporaneously (at the second advent of Christ), yet so that there is a certain order of rising according to the merits of the individual.

So far as we know, this view really originated among the Württemberg theosophists. Oetinger speaks quite positively on this subject. He holds that those who were seen to accompany the Lord on white horses (Rev. xix. 14) must have been such saints as had already received back their bodies. Moreover, he hints that those whom John saw standing by the sea of glass (Rev. xv. 2) must have had their bodies, otherwise the apostle could not have seen them. His idea is, that as the souls beyond the grave become more and more matured, their corporeal substance also gradually forms, and since this development does not advance equally quickly in all, some must therefore rise sooner than others, *i.e.* have their corporeal substance completed earlier (*Theol. ex idea vitæ deducta*, secs. 204 and 212; cf. Auberlen, *Die Theosophie T. Ch. Oetingers*, pp. 581-91). It is also told of Oetinger that when, after the lapse of a year from the burial of

We have hitherto only been trying to discover who will be sharers in the first resurrection. We have still to consider what will be the condition of those who rise again. That their destiny will be glorious already appears from this,

a friend of his who happened to be a very champion of the faith, they found his coffin empty, he remarked, "Why are you astonished at it? Have you not read of the first resurrection? Our friend has attained the first resurrection; for his spirit, soul, and body have already been completely sanctified and filled with the spirit of grace" (Mühe, *Das enthüllte Geheimniss d. Zukunft*, ii. 3). Rothe (*Ethik*, 801 *et seq.*) develops the same thought in a more speculative fashion. By introspection, and quiet undisturbed self-reflection, the soul of the believer in the kingdom of death will further develop, and gradually produce that luminous body whereby each one achieves his own resurrection, one earlier, another later. This, indeed, seems to have been a favourite thought among the more or less theosophically-minded South German theologians. The well-known theologian Kapff develops it further in his *Epistle-Sermons*. He tries to prove it by a reference to John v. 25 ("The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live," therefore arise), and he also mentions Luke xiv. 14 ("the resurrection of the just"). In Revelation xx. 4, 5 he sees the corner-stone of this "first resurrection." We find the same thoughts in the famous theosophist, Michael Hahn, who says: "This resurrection of the firstfruits of the Lord begins with the resurrection of Christ and ends when He comes for the marriage of the Lamb" (Stroh, *Die Lehre J. M. Hahns*, sec. 261). And, as has been said, this view, already cautiously hinted at by Bengel (*Gnomon* to Rev. xx. 5), seems to have been somewhat general in certain circles in South Germany (*vide* also *Stimmen aus dem Heiligthume der christl. Mys.*, ii. pp. 196-202).

Of orthodox Lutheran theologians, so far as we are aware, Keil is the only one who has taken up this idea and attempted to establish it (*Commentary on Ezek.*, pp. 511 *et seq.*, 1st ed.). He appeals to the following passages:—

1. Matthew xxvii. 52. According to this, "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves" after Christ's resurrection. (But this was an extraordinary miracle, and we have no warrant that it will be repeated throughout the ages.)

2. Matthew xvi. 28 (*cf.* Matt. xxiv. 34; Luke ix. 27). From this it seems to appear that Jesus, even before a generation had passed, would come again; and with His "second advent" the resurrection is almost invariably connected, he says. Well, it is connected with His personal coming for judgment (over Antichrist or over all), but not with His non-personal coming merely for judgment over Jerusalem (the destruction of Jerusalem). Moreover, Matthew xvi. 28 does not refer only to judgment over Jerusalem (*vide* Matt. xvi. 27; *cf.* xxv. 31; Rom. ii. 6).

3. John iii. 18 (*cf.* v. 24, vi. 40). "He that believeth on Him is not condemned," "he . . . hath eternal life." Of course, such an one does not need to wait till the judgment for his resurrection. (Here, however, it is only said that such an one in Christ is already delivered for Christ's sake; but yet he may appear before the tribunal on the Judgment Day. If such should not appear there, who would be placed on the right hand?)

that they who participate in it are called "blessed and holy" (Rev. xx. 6). But wherein consists this "blessedness"? We are only told that they "reigned with Christ a thousand years" (xx. 4), and during that period were "priests of God

4. John v. 25. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live"; consequently the resurrection had already then begun. [But if there is no reference here to the quickening of the spiritually dead, then there is doubtless reference to the raisings from the dead which Jesus effected (Lazarus, etc.), and these were an earnest that he would one day awake all the dead. To suppose that the resurrection of the dead had already begun would conflict with the apostle's words, that the resurrection of Christ is the starting-point of any resurrection whatever (1 Cor. xv. 23). Besides, the author here comes into conflict with himself; for according to him this resurrection of the dead would first begin with Christ's coming to judgment over Jerusalem (forty years later).]

5. 1 Thessalonians iv. 14-18. This passage also refers to the destruction of Jerusalem as the beginning of a continuous resurrection of the dead. (But in these verses this resurrection is connected with the change of the living. Is it possible that such a change takes place now, and then again at that time? In such a case it would certainly have been the subject of observation.)

6. Revelation vi. 9-11. Here the white robes of the saints are their resurrection bodies. They who wear them have therefore already risen. (But according to Revelation iii. 4 the white robes are evidently only a figurative expression for spotless purity.)

We believe that our brief note is sufficient to show that the argument relied upon is not a valid one. However, it does not so much rest with us here to prove that there is no such resurrection. What is mainly required of us is to show that this gradual resurrection can under no circumstances be the one which in Revelation xx. 5, 6, is called "the first resurrection," and that for the following reasons:—

(a) Such a supposition would upset all the Revelation, since it would make its last section a description of something which, according to this view, belongs to the whole history of the Church from the destruction of Jerusalem until the last day.

(b) Then according to Keil, the millennial kingdom began when the Church became the State Church (consequently in A.D. 323); but this gradual resurrection began at the destruction of Jerusalem (in A.D. 70), and thus there is an interval of about 250 years between the two events. But in the Revelation the first resurrection and the establishment of the millennial kingdom are evidently contemporaneous.

(c) In the Revelation the imprisonment of the devil precedes the first resurrection. This, according to Keil, had taken place even at the time when Jesus said: "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31). But in that case it already had come to pass when John wrote his Revelation. But how does this accord with the words of the angel to John at the very beginning of the visions of the Book of the Future: "I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (Rev. iv. 1).

(d) "The first resurrection," in Revelation xx. 4 *et seq.*, undoubtedly leads

and of "Christ" (xx. 6). Wherein consists this dominion and priesthood? or in other words, what is the real nature of the millennial kingdom?

The answer which has been given to this question throughout the ages has essentially depended on the answer given to another question: Where will this kingdom be? Where will those reside who rise during the thousand years?

On this point our text gives us no information; it merely says that they will be with Christ, be where He is. But where is He to be during that period? According to His nature as the God-man He is, now as always, everywhere present filling all things (Eph. iv. 10). But the question is: Where will He, during this time, be visibly present along with those who have been raised and glorified?—here on earth or in heaven?

In former days it was usually supposed that this prelude to the everlasting kingdom of glory would be upon the earth. And there is much which might seem to support such a view. There is nothing whatever said here to imply that Jesus returned to heaven with His followers who rose, nor is it said that He returned to the earth when the Last Judgment was held at the close of the millennial kingdom (Rev. xx. 10 *et seq.*). These undeniably are two remarkable circumstances which must be said to favour the view that the Saviour remained upon the earth, with His saints who had risen during the thousand

us to suppose that it is something instantaneous and simultaneous, *i.e.* something which takes place in an instant, and so that all who participate therein do so at the same time—consequently the very reverse of Keil's gradual resurrection, which is to drag its weary length through all the history of the Church, so that one rises now and another then.

We have dwelt thus particularly on this view and argument of Keil, in order to show whither that extreme orthodoxy may lead which will not submit to the Word of God. The fact is, that Keil at any price seeks to maintain the old "Lutheran" view that the millennial kingdom is a thing of the past (is to be referred to the period from 300–1300 A.D.—a fine time for it too! The darkest period of the Middle Ages is included in it). But in order to secure his point he must first explain away "the first resurrection"; for that expression stands there and cannot be overlooked. Instead of the first resurrection, therefore, he would set up a gradual resurrection of which Scripture knows nothing. All his exegetical manipulation is consequently biassed, and the result is, as was to be expected, a warning of what happens even to the best of men when they will be wise beyond what is written.

years, and established a kingdom of glory here in which they had their share. It is generally supposed that Jerusalem will be rebuilt and made the capital and centre of this kingdom. Many even think that the converted Jews will enjoy a central and prominent position, and especially come to serve the Lord in the proclamation of the gospel to the heathen who are still left; whilst, on the contrary, others refer the conversion both of the Jews and the Gentiles mainly to this period.

But although, as has been indicated, there is much that seems to imply that the millennial kingdom will be upon the earth, yet this view, looked at closely, involves such great difficulties that we must definitely reject it. Our main objections to it are these:—

1. Nature is manifestly not yet glorified. It is the old earth on which still live unconverted mortals, as we plainly see from Revelation xx. 8. How then can the glorified live on it, and be blessed and happy there? To a glorified body belongs a glorified nature. Undoubtedly, some have thought that they could remove this objection by supposing a partial glorification of nature during this period; but apart from the fact that a multitude of absolutely glorified ones would gain no advantage by residing on an only partially glorified earth, even this partial glorifying is irreconcilable with the earth continuing to remain the abode of ordinary mortals.

2. If this kingdom of glory is to be on earth, it must certainly have some task to solve for the unglorified humanity still living upon the earth. That task can only be the conversion of the unconverted and the growth in grace of believers. But how can the glorified have intercourse with and influence over those not beatified? In any case such an influence would operate in the way of sight and not of faith,—but is that God's way of salvation for unconverted sinners? Certainly not.

3. A still greater difficulty is presented by what is said in Revelation xx. 7 *et seq.* There we are told that at the close of the millennial kingdom the devil, once more at liberty, will gather his followers—all wicked men—for war, and will

beleaguer the camp of the saints and the beloved city. That city is, according to this view, the capital of the millennial kingdom, in the midst of which Christ Himself is visibly present as King over His sanctified ones. But how is it possible to imagine that ordinary mortals can make war upon those that are glorified, in the midst of whom, too, the Lord Himself is personally present? These glorified ones must either have been invisible to ordinary mortals, and then of course they could not make war upon them, or else they must have seen them in their beatification and glory, and then the most audacious would understand that any assault whatever was an impossibility.

We are consequently compelled to assume that the Saviour, after the judgment upon Antichrist, returns to heaven with His saints risen or transformed in a moment; that there they are admitted to rule with Him for the thousand years before the general resurrection; then comes the Last Judgment.

However, it cannot be denied that even this view is beset with difficulties. The most important of these are, that there is nowhere else in Scripture any mention of two advents of the Lord still to come, and that it is not said even here that Christ ascends to heaven with His risen saints, or that He at the end of the thousand years returns to the earth. Yet these difficulties do not seem to us to be so insuperable as those which we have already seen made the first view impossible. It is quite true that God's Word generally only speaks of one advent of Christ, and not of two. Nor does it say anything about the intervening period in the thousand years. In Scripture the whole runs together into the one conception, the advent of Christ. Therefore will the objection against the first resurrection, which was derived from this fact, also hold good of the millennial kingdom as a whole,—and yet those "thousand years" stand there, and they cannot be set aside. There they are in the Word of God, and we must obediently submit to that Word.

Besides, is it so very wonderful that Christ's double advent is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture? Have we not a

striking parallel in the prophecies in the Old Testament about the coming of Christ in the flesh—His first coming and His coming to judgment? In the Old Testament prophecies, as a rule, these flow together, although the whole history of the Church lies between them. To the vision of the prophets the two kingdoms of the Messiah in His humiliation and in His exaltation often run together into one image. Would it then be so wonderful if in the New Testament also the kingdom of glory and its prelude, as well as the double coming of the Lord corresponding thereto, blended together in the view of all the holy writers except the last, who, just as such, saw most clearly what was furthest off? Would not this be a necessary result of the peculiar character of the prophetic prospect which we have previously pointed out? (pp. 11–14). The eye must, so to say, have already seen the last headland before it can observe the bay (the millennial kingdom) which lies between the two advents of Christ that are still in the future. Until then they must both combine like two mountains of which one conceals the other when they are seen from the distance.

It is certainly strange that the Revelation itself says nothing either concerning the Saviour ascending to heaven with His risen saints at the beginning of the millennial kingdom, or concerning His return to the earth at the close of that kingdom in order to pass judgment upon all the generations of mankind,—an omission which undeniably would naturally lead one to suppose that He and His saints remained upon the earth during the period between the first and second (last) resurrection, if the previously indicated reasons did not make this supposition extremely improbable, yea, almost impossible. We must candidly confess that we are unable satisfactorily to explain the silence of the Revelation on this point. The only ground for it, that we can conceive, is that now the infinite eternity is so nearly reached that this prelude is overshadowed by it, and gets so little consideration in comparison with it, that the seer does not enter further into its details. The first and the second advents are only moments in the great end, which is termed “the Day of the Lord,”—the day whose dawn

is the first resurrection, and whose evening-glow casts its radiance on the Last Judgment. Even granting that between this morning and evening there is a period which Scripture designates as "a thousand years," yet it is only a day in the sight of Him to whom "a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night" (Ps. xc. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 8).

Everything considered, we infer that the prelude to this kingdom of glory will be not here upon earth, but in heaven.¹

Now, wherein consists this millennial dominion in heaven?

Scripture defines it with two phrases; those who have participated in the first resurrection will during the thousand years "be priests of God and of Christ," and they will "reign with Him" (Rev. xx. 6),—consequently they are to be priests and kings in heaven. By the former of these terms is implied that they will enjoy free access to God, be close to Him stand before His face, behold Him, enjoy Him, and sing His praise; by the latter term is implied that they will be allowed to share in His royal glory. The former therefore describes their blessedness from its inward side; the latter more from its outward side, their plenitude of power and their resplendent glory. Whether this expression also indicates that they will exercise, along with God, an influence upon the human beings still living on the earth, we meanwhile leave undecided.

But even if this kingdom of glory must be supposed to be in heaven, it is manifest that there is likewise to be a kingdom of God upon the earth, which will also last a thousand years, and which may with reason be called the millennial kingdom on earth. The open supporters of Antichrist will be slain (Rev. xix. 21), and the Lord's elect will rise from the dead, be glorified and removed from the earth. But there will certainly be many who do not really belong to either of these classes. The power and kingdom of Antichrist have scarcely extended literally over

¹So also Auberlen, Madsen, and others, although they do not attempt to explain away the difficulties we have drawn attention to.

the whole earth, and even within his kingdom there have doubtless been many fickle ones who, only in part and half-heartedly, have yielded to his superior might. But when a fearful judgment falls upon this kingdom, and when, in addition, the great wonders (the coming of the Lord, the binding of Satan, the resurrection and removal from the earth of the pious) are not concealed from them, they will of themselves come to conversion, although this tardy conversion will not make them worthy to be citizens of the millennial kingdom of glory in heaven. They therefore become the nucleus of a new Church of the Lord upon the earth. That there will be such a Church we see plainly enough from Revelation xx. 9. In that passage, certainly, there is nothing said about its formation and its internal and external history during the thousand years; but there is mention of its condition immediately before the final consummation.

Now, how are we to conceive of the condition and development of this Church on earth during the period under consideration?

There are several circumstances which must be conceived as exercising a considerable influence upon the state of the Church on earth during this period, making it something different from what it was in earlier times. Let us consider shortly the most important of these.

In the first place, it is a law in history,—to some extent also in the kingdom of nature,—that when a force has been exerted, it loses itself for a period, and the more violent the force has been, the longer is the rest required before it regains its strength. After the most violent and protracted storm there generally follows a long period of settled good weather. The more violent the thunderstorm has been, and the more energetically it has discharged itself, the greater is the probability that the thundery weather has thereby spent itself in its first outburst. And the greater the expenditure of energy an intellectual movement has manifested in order to master mankind, the greater and longer also will be its passivity when its violent attempt ends in failure; for then the reaction against it is able to put forth its strength. Now the time of Antichrist is exactly such a period of mad

rage, when all the evil in humanity collects itself for a violent assault upon the kingdom of God. In this assault it exhausts its force. But it ends in absolute failure, for the assault is crushed by the judgment of the Lord. It is a thunder-storm of wickedness which sets heaven and earth in commotion. When it has spent its fury, has exhausted its force, we have every reason to hope that the intellectual heaven will for a long period be clearer than it has ever previously been.

In the next place, there can be no question that the great doom passed upon the antichristian kingdom will have its after-effects. The memory of it will live long in the history of succeeding centuries and fill mankind with fear, with terror of the Almighty God. Even the ungodly will not, for a long time, venture to exhibit the same audacity as before; for in this history they will read, in letters of fire, the words, "God is not mocked" (Gal. vi. 7). Such terror certainly cannot make men Christians; but yet it can to some extent keep ungodliness in awe, keep it within certain limits, and even this has its importance for the kingdom of God; for it will afford the children of God more peace and quietness, the kingdom of God more recognition, and it will certainly also prepare the way for the work of the Spirit in the hearts of many who hitherto have stood without.

And still further, it is a very important factor that the devil, during this period, is bound. We must regard this as implying that he (and his angels) during this period are actually deprived of every opportunity of directly and personally influencing mankind (Rev. xx. 3). Undoubtedly this does not necessarily imply that man will now be free from temptations. Even the children of God in the world are still sinners, and of sinners the saying always holds true: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. i. 14). And they are still surrounded by the unconverted, by a world which "lies in wickedness," and such a world will always continue to tempt and harass God's children with threats, enticements, and evil examples, although its audacity may be kept somewhat in check by the memory of the doom that has just been passed.

But it is certainly a great relief to be free from the personal assaults of the devil, "the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. vi. 16). Men have still to wrestle with "flesh and blood," but not against "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12 R.V.). Even the world's resistance to the kingdom of God and to the work of God's Spirit upon themselves must be influenced by the fact that there no longer stands behind it a personal devil who inspires and leads it. The devil is without doubt the "god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4). If it has lost him as its leader, its conflict with the good must become feebler, less systematic, so to say, more vacillating.

The conclusion we are forced to accept almost necessarily as the result of these various considerations is that the kingdom of God on earth will, during this period, experience a prosperity it has never previously known, a spring which heralds the near approach of the summer of eternity,—a summer which no winter will succeed. This must be supposed to manifest itself partly in the greater fulness and more vigorous pulsation of Christian life in the Church, partly in the suppression of the opposition of the world for a time. The opposition is not annihilated, but kept in subjection, both by this fulness of the Church's life and by the various other influences which have been indicated.

It would be strange if, during this time, the Church did not carry on a vigorous work both at home and abroad (home and foreign missions), if it has anyone to whom to make known the gospel,—as assuredly it will have. So long as the Church is in the world there will always be within its pale many nominal Christians whom it is necessary to make actual Christians; and that is the task of home missionary enterprise. And there will certainly also be multitudes of actual heathens to work upon. Before the advent of Antichrist, as we have already seen, the gospel will doubtless have reached all nations; but it does not consequently follow that all these have become Christians even in name. To seek to gather these into its fold will be one of the great tasks of the Church during this time, since its state and circumstances, as already pointed out, give it greater qualifications for accomplishing

the task than ever previously. In Revelation xx. 8, however, we see that it will not be able fully to succeed in this; for there can be little doubt that "Gog and Magog" here chiefly refer to the nations at the extremities of the earth which are still little affected by Christianity, and these probably had formerly stood outside of the domain of the antichristian kingdom. But of this more anon.

A very difficult question which we dare not venture to overlook is this: Will the risen saints who rule with Christ during the thousand years exercise any influence on the contemporaneous millennial kingdom on the earth? Some have answered this question in the affirmative. They have supposed that there will then take place some new and wonderful connection between the "upper" and the "lower" Church, which will be greatly to the advantage of the latter.¹ But Scripture says nothing whatever on the point. Appeal has certainly been made to the statement that these risen ones will "rule with Christ," but the same phrase is also used of the blessed after the judgment, when there is no Church militant to rule over (Rev. xxii. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 12). But that need not imply that they will exercise some influence upon it. For other reasons we must regard such an influence as hardly probable. For in Scripture there is no evidence that God employs the souls of the saved as His messengers to those living on the earth. In the only passage where it is said that a prayer for such a messenger was made, the petition was refused (Luke xvi. 27-31). And why should they be more fitted to render service as such messengers after they have received their glorified bodies? Such an influence must undoubtedly be a spiritual influence; otherwise we forsake the realm of faith and enter that of sight. But sight belongs to those already glorified,—it is not, and cannot according to the nature of the case be, the way of salvation for sinners living in the flesh. When appeal has been made to the intercourse of Jesus with His disciples between His resurrection and ascension as analogous to this supposed intercourse

¹ Such is the view of Auberlen in his *Der Proph. Daniel und d. Off. Joh.*, pp. 381 *et seq.* He develops this thought very finely, but yet without being able to support it with any tenable proof.

of the glorified with mankind during the millennium upon earth, it has been overlooked that the Saviour stood in a relation to His disciples that was very different from that in which the risen saints will stand to the Church on earth; and it must be remembered that these had already ascended to heaven, whilst the Saviour during the forty days had not yet made His ascension, but remained in a state of transition between the earthly and the heavenly existence.

Of the duration of the millennial kingdom we can only say that we do not seem to be entitled to press the phrase "a thousand years" literally. Probably the phrase only means that the kingdom will have its appointed time, its period, the full number of years necessary for its development ($10 \times 10 \times 10$ is the expression for the greatest perfection). On the other hand, we must distinctly reject the theory that the number here refers not to duration at all but only to perfection; for when this number is connected with the word "years," it can certainly not imply merely perfection in general, but a perfection in time, *i.e.* the full time which God has assigned for this stage of the development of His kingdom.

The reader will have observed, possibly with some surprise, that the preceding sketch of the millennial kingdom has been very meagre. The kingdom is there, but we have not had much with which to fill out its period. Many other writers provide a superabundance of material with which to supply the blank, and a great deal is said about all that is to happen during this period, and all the Old Testament prophecies that are to come to their fulfilment.¹ The reason for our silence on this point is that we have not been able to assure ourselves that a single one of these prophecies refers to the millennial kingdom. And for reasons which lie in the nature of the progressive revelation, it is hardly probable that these prophecies have anything whatever to do with this matter. In the Old Testament the first coming of the Lord in the flesh, and His last coming to judgment, are so seen under one figure that it appears as

¹ A very copious list of such prophecies may be found in Koch, *Das tausendjährige Reich*, p. 30. Cf. Dr. Cumming's *The Millennial Rest*.

one and the same thing. It is only necessary to read a prophecy such as Joel iii. 1-4, in order to understand this. The prophet sees the pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, and the advent of the Judgment Day, as events which seem to blend together into one picture. What the old prophets foresaw and predicted was the coming Messiah and the coming messianic kingdom. Into this picture they introduced their glorious sketches of the salvation and peace in which men then should share from the period of the atonement on Golgotha to the completion of nature. But to their sight all this appears as a unity, not as a long historic development with its various steps and periods. To prove this by review of all the pertinent prophecies could not possibly be accomplished without the writing of a special book on the subject. But it is not required; for it has long ago been admitted by all thoughtful Biblical expositors that that is the prophet's method of looking at the messianic kingdom. And is it in the least probable that the prophets, with this view of the matter, and starting from this general idea, would announce anything so specially within the time of the end as the millennial kingdom? Everything which has been supposed to relate in those prophecies to these points (*e.g.* to the transformation of nature, in passages like Isa. xi. 6 *et. seq.*, lxv. 17) must therefore undoubtedly be referred to the final consummation of the messianic kingdom, and not to this intermediate stage.¹

Since the prophets saw the messianic kingdom essentially as a glorious continuation and consummation of the Old Testament kingdom of God, it was quite natural that they should mainly dwell on the importance it would have for Israel. Now, when they direct these predictions to the millennial kingdom, they do not fail to make Israel play a prominent part within it. And that is the case with nearly all who

¹ The matter is on a very different footing when the Revelation speaks, for it stands on the ground of the new covenant, and specially treats of the last days of this era. Here at the very outset one may expect such a special prophecy about an intermediate stage within the time of the end, and here, indeed, it is found.

refer these prophecies to the period of the millennial kingdom. To us, however, all such interpretation of Scripture, for the reasons pointed out, appears to be a sad misunderstanding of prophecy, depending on a misconception of the characteristic nature of the prophetic prospect, and on a disregard of the historic development of prophecy.

NOTE I

We cannot leave a subject so disputed as this without giving a short review of its history in the Church. But from considerations of space we must confine ourselves to the briefest possible survey. We can only give a succinct account of the leading views in different ages.

A distinction may be made between three fundamental views which we may term the genuine Chiliastic, the spurious Chiliastic, and the Antichiliastic.

I. *The genuine Chiliastic.* It is a general characteristic of those who hold the views designated by this common name, that they set themselves seriously to understand the teaching of the Revelation regarding a millennial kingdom. This is known mainly by their holding that this kingdom begins with an actual and corporeal, not a mere spiritual or figurative, resurrection from the dead. But they vary in details, so that we have many different forms and permutations of the theory.

As will be seen from the line taken by us in the text, we agree with this view, since no other seems to satisfy the words of Revelation xx. 1-6.

This view is the oldest and the youngest, *i.e.* it was the most general in the Early Church, and in modern times it has become more and more recognised as the one most accordant with Scripture. Let us now briefly notice what forms it has assumed in the various periods of the Church's history.

1. *In the ancient Church.* "*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*" does not mention this subject. The oldest Chiliastic utterance we have is the one by Papias (*ob.* 163 ?), which has been preserved for us by Irenæus (*Ad. Hær.*, v. 32) and Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39). According to the former, "the elders who had been the disciples of the Apostle John"—among whom he shortly after specially named Papias—reported that they had heard from him how the Lord was accustomed to speak regarding these things, saying: "Days will come when there will grow up vines, each of which will have 10,000 boughs, on every bough 10,000 branches, on every branch 10,000 shoots, on every shoot 10,000 clusters, and on every cluster 10,000 grapes, each grape of which, when it is pressed, will give 10,000 measures of wine. And if any of the saints lays hold of one of these clusters, another will call out to him: 'I am better, take me, and bless the Lord through me.'" We have a similar utterance regarding the grain: From every grain that is sown there will spring up 10,000 ears, etc. And then it is added that the same will be true of all other vegetation. All this is to happen in the millennial kingdom. Papias, says Irenæus, adds "this is accepted by the believers," and he states that Judas would not believe the Lord when He spoke thus, and that the Lord then declared: "Those who participate in it will see it." In the

passage from Eusebius it is merely reported that Papias, among other "somewhat fabulous things" (*μυθικότερα*), had repeated, as oral tradition, that "after the resurrection from the dead there would come a millennium during which Christ would in person exercise dominion on the earth."

It is apparent that the view of the kingdom of glory here is very sensuous, coarsely material; and since the same view is found even in an earlier apocryphal document (Apocr., *Baruch*), it is probable, as Professor Madsen indicates, that Papias—who, according to Eusebius, was somewhat narrow in his views—has either confounded the contents of this book with the utterances of the Lord, or allowed the ideas he had received from it to influence his view of some figurative expressions made use of by our Saviour. There is scarcely any doubt that Jewish conceptions exercised their influence on the view of many Jewish Christians in the direction of giving their millennarianism a strong savour of "materialism," since they mainly dwelt on the thought of an earthly glory with material pleasure.*

In Barnabas, one of the Apostolic Fathers, we have hints of the doctrine of a millennial kingdom, but without the materialistic features that are found in Papias. He chiefly lays weight on the analogy that as a Sabbath followed the six days of Creation, so a Sabbath of a thousand years will follow the six thousand years of history before the whole earthly development is brought to a close (Barnabas, *Epist.* 15).

It has been said that traces of Chiliasm are to be found in another of the apostolic Fathers, Hermas,† but this is hardly the case. At any rate, we have not been able to discover any such traces. On the other hand, references are plain enough in Justin Martyr (*ob.* 155 ?), who, appealing to the Apostle John, says: "Among us a man, by name John, one of the Lord's Apostles, in a revelation vouchsafed to him, has predicted that they who have believed on our Christ will be permitted to spend a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that thereafter a general, in short an everlasting, resurrection will take place." He asserts that that was the general view among orthodox believers, but yet he adds that many good Christians held another view (*Dial. c. c. Tryph.* 80, 81).

The most important representative of this kind of Chiliasm, however, was Irenæus (*ob.* 202), who, in *Against Heretics* (chap. xxii. *et seq.*), unfolds in detail his ideas regarding the millennial kingdom. According to him, the believers that have died will, after the destruction of Antichrist, arise and rule with Christ for a thousand years in Jerusalem, once again restored. Here there will be abundance of earthly blessings, but chiefly a blessed fellowship with the personal Christ. This will form the transition to, and preparation for, the personal fellowship with the Father after the Judgment that follows the general resurrection with which this kingdom concludes. To further supplement the description of the millennial kingdom he employs the Old Testament prophecies regarding the splendour of the messianic kingdom.

* As is well known, the Jews entertained, and still entertain, large expectations of a messianic kingdom of great earthly splendour, which will begin with the resurrection of the dead Israelites, and will be brought to a close with the conflict of Gog and Magog (*vide* Weber, *System*, sec. 82 *et seq.*).

† *Vide* Shedd's *History of Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii. p. 390, and Hagenbach's *Dogmengeschichte*, sec. 75, note 6.

To these two authors very great weight must be attached, since Justin Martyr wrote his book scarcely half a century after the death of the Apostle John, and Irenæus, who came from Asia Minor, where that apostle spent his latest years, personally knew the men who had been John's immediate disciples. It is possible that they may have misunderstood the words of the apostle in many particulars, but it is not probable that they, especially Irenæus, can have mistaken his fundamental views on this subject.

Tertullian (*ob.* 220) speaks to practically the same purpose in *Against Marcion* (iii. 24), and so does Hippolytus in his exposition of the Prophet Daniel, of which, unfortunately, we have only fragments left. Yet the latter does not expressly mention the millennial kingdom. One feature peculiar to him is that he refers the appearance of Antichrist to the year 500 after Christ.

We do not mean to weary the reader with references to the other Chiliasts in the ancient Church, of whom especially Lactantius (*ob.* 330) speaks voluminously on this subject, and gives us a description of the kingdom of glory which strongly recalls Papias (*Div. Instit.*, vii. 14-26). We may conclude this section with the following notes that are deserving of attention :—

(a) Chiliasm never appears in the creed of the ancient Church, in the sense that it found a place in any symbolical book or Confession of Faith. There were, undoubtedly, many theologians who did not approve of it, or, at least, are silent about it in their writings. But so general was the Chiliastic view till far into the third century, that such an unprejudiced, profound, and sober Church historian as Gieseler can declare: "Chiliasm was . . . the general belief during that age, and was opposed almost alone by the Gnostics, later also by some of the opponents of the Montanists" (*Kirchengeschichte*, I. i. pp. 223, 234, 2nd ed.).

(b) How firmly rooted it was in the Book of Revelation appears best from the fact that its most vehement opponents (*e.g.*, Cajus in Rome) considered that the best, if not the only, way to combat it was to deny the genuineness of that book.

(c) Chiliasm was most widely diffused in Asia Minor,—where the Apostle John had spent his last days,—and in the circles spiritually influenced from that region.

(d) There were several circumstances which led to this doctrine being strongly disputed from about the middle of the third century, until finally in the fourth it was worsted and became gradually labelled as heterodoxy, viz :—

(1) From Origen (*ob.* 254) onward there was waged by the so-called Alexandrian school a vigorous warfare against every literal view of Scripture. Everything was to be explained "spiritually," to be spiritualized away, and naturally this was the case with the words of the Revelation bearing upon the millennial kingdom.

(2) Chiliasm came into unmerited disrepute because heretical sects took it up and, in their usual way, exaggerated it and introduced false elements into it—as is the case still. Attention was directed to the fact that the heretic Cerinthus had been one of its first defenders; and when the Montanists took Chiliasm up and asserted it with fanatical zeal—as the Irvingites do in our own days—it became more and more suspected by the orthodox who had to contend with them, and the result was, as so often still, that to destroy the part they gave up the whole.

(3) Then when at length the Church became the State Church, there was

no longer any use for the kingdom of glory. The Church believed that it had now attained its kingdom of glory on the earth, and from this time—as we shall see anon—the millennial kingdom was sought for in the history of the Church on earth.

2. *The Period from the Fourth to the Seventeenth Century.* During that long period there was within the Church scarcely a trace of any real Chiliasm. It was only among the sects that it was now and then to be met with; and on the whole it was only they who sought from the Revelation to find consolation for the future,* whilst the Church interpreted the Revelation—and, indeed, the whole of Scripture—allegorically, and sought to apply its contents to the whole history of the Church.

Nor did the Reformers on the whole contribute much to the understanding of the Revelation, or to the exposition of the passage bearing upon the millennial kingdom. Only the Anabaptists took up Chiliasm, and they treated it in their own fanatical way.

3. *From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day.*

During this period the old Chiliasm has come to life again, and it is not the sects who have taken up the work, but the most prominent men of the Church. Amongst these we mention, before all others, Albert Bengel (*ob.* 1752). Certainly even during the century which preceded the appearance of his exposition of the Revelation, in 1740, there were those who had taken up this subject more seriously than before; but yet it was Bengel who first in earnest gave to this study a new impulse forward. Now Chiliasm was no longer championed by some incapable enthusiast, but by the greatest expositor of the time, yea, one of the greatest of all time. If anyone has been specially anxious to discover the true and actual meaning of a passage and set it forth with literal accuracy, Bengel is certainly the man. When he entered the lists on behalf of Chiliasm, it entered into league with a sober and capable expositor of Scripture. But, whilst saying this, we do not mean to imply that in every respect, and at all times, he was absolutely right in his interpretation. For instance, he still adhered to the old error that the papacy (“the Hildebrandian”) is Antichrist,† and his calculations, according to which the millennial kingdom should begin in 1836, were not worth much. But what concerns us here is that he very strongly asserted that according to the Revelation this kingdom is something extraordinary, which belongs to the time of the end. Peculiar to himself, and undoubtedly depending on a misinterpretation of the text, is the view that the thousand years during which the devil will be bound (Rev. xx. 2), and the thousand years during which the righteous who have risen will rule with Christ (xx. 5), are two different periods separated by an intermediate period, “a little season” (xx. 3) of $11\frac{1}{2}$ years. By the former thousand years he understands a time of prosperity for the Church on earth (1836–2836), by the latter a rule of glory in heaven, which, however, in a way begins simultaneously with that intermediate period (2836–3836), after which the Judgment will take place.

Bengel, as was naturally to be expected, met with much opposition, but not with any worthy opponent. We do not purpose, however, dwelling on

* *Vide* the erudite work of Professor Lücke, pp. 1004–12.

† It will be seen that to some extent he is still entangled in the misconceptions of the old Church-history view.

contemporary and succeeding attempts to expound Revelation xx. 1 *et seq.* Soon all such attempts were overwhelmed in the floods of Rationalism, which threatened to sweep away the whole substance of the Scriptures, and of course made very short work of such details as the millennial kingdom.

Only after the renaissance of the theologico-scientific life in our own century was the Revelation again properly taken hold of. And if we except the English-speaking world, where the Church-history view still retained some life, its fate was almost sealed. Thinkers referred the contents of the book to one of the two periods of the Church's life, either to its beginning or its close. The former view saw in the book only a symbolical sketch of events which essentially belonged to the time of its author. Antichrist was Nero or the emperors as a body who persecuted Christianity. The prophecy concerning the millennial kingdom had no longer any interest except historically. The whole was reduced to a mass of fantastic dreams, which at the most may have helped to encourage the persecuted during their tribulations in the first century. Such a view, naturally, was mainly supported by men who were more or less smitten with Rationalism (Bleek, de Wette, Ewald, Reuss, and others). Thinkers of a distinctly believing tendency, on the other hand, now began better to understand that the book referred to the time of the end, and that therefore its expressions concerning the millennial kingdom must also be referred to some stage in this ending-time. Only now was the old Chiliasm taken up again, cleansed from its impure (coarsely sensual) additions, and given a firmer Biblical support.

We cannot here enumerate—much less enter into details concerning—all the authors of modern times who have taken up the subject. We must confine ourselves to a brief indication of the points wherein they agree and wherein they differ.

They are tolerably agreed on these points:—

(a) The pope is not Antichrist. Antichrist is some particular person who will appear at the last time, and after the judgment upon him the millennial kingdom will follow.

(b) "The millennial kingdom" is not merely a figurative expression for a flourishing state in the Church, but something new, a prelude to the final glory.

(c) This kingdom, which has as its presupposition the fall of Antichrist and the binding of the devil, begins with a resurrection of the dead—an actual resurrection of the body—and it will be brought to a close with a last conflict; then will follow the final resurrection and the Judgment.

On the other hand, there is still diversity of opinion among the various Chiliastic expositors, mainly on the following questions:—

(a) Is the personal advent of the Lord to occur before or after the millennial kingdom? Or are we to expect a double advent; one before and one after that kingdom?

(b) Who will participate in the millennial kingdom? Will it only be the martyrs during that last era, or the martyrs of all ages, or all real Christians who have died previous to that time or who are then alive?

(c) Is our information about that kingdom limited to Revelation xx. 1–6, or are there other prophecies in the Old Testament or the New which cast light upon this question? And in that case, what are these prophecies?

(d) Will this kingdom be here on earth or will it be in heaven? or will it be in both places contemporaneously?

(e) Will those glorified at that time exercise any spiritual influence on such members of the race on earth as are still unglorified?

(f) Will there be any missions to the Jews or Gentiles during that period? Or will all missionary efforts be at an end before that kingdom comes?

(g) Will converted Israel occupy any special and leading position in the millennial kingdom? Will it then be gathered back to its own land? Will Jerusalem be restored and become the centre of the kingdom? Will the Mosaic worship of God be re-established, possibly in a glorified form?

Such have been the questions at issue within the Church. Some of the sects have identified themselves with still other views. Thus the Irvingites suppose that they will all be taken to heaven before the appearance of Antichrist, and that they will thus escape the tribulations of the antichristian age.

How we have endeavoured to answer these various disputed questions will appear from the exposition given in the text.

Naturally, there are within the various Protestant Churches many who do not favour Chiliasm in any form, but among scientific expositors of any importance such Antichiliasmists are decidedly in the minority, and that a steadily diminishing minority.

II. *Spurious Chiliasts*. Over these we need not delay very long. They confine themselves to supposing that the Church, towards the time of the end, will experience a season of prosperity previously unknown. But they do not venture to take issue upon the most important points connected therewith—the personal Antichrist, the binding of the devil, and the first resurrection. In the utterances in Revelation bearing upon these subjects they see only figurative expressions for the activity and influence of certain spiritual forces which they cannot further specify, and they expect merely a period of spiritual prosperity in the Church towards the time of the end. The words in Revelation xx. 1–6 certainly say something more than that.

There have been such cautious Chiliasts, doubtless, in all ages, frequently very able and worthy men, *e.g.*, Vitringa, Spener, Martensen, and others. That they deprive the words of Scripture of their due, we have previously endeavoured to show.

III. *Antichiliasmists*. By this term we understand such as deny that we need expect any prelude to the kingdom of glory, in the one form or the other, before the Last Judgment.

But the Antichiliasmists find that “the thousand years” stand in God’s Word; and they must therefore attempt to explain them in a manner which agrees with their view. Here one of two courses has been followed:—

1. They assume that the Church’s whole life on earth is the millennial kingdom. This is the general view within the Roman Catholic Church.

2. Or they endeavour to find the millennial kingdom in a distinct section of about a thousand years within the history of the Church. Some favour the selection of one section of that history, others another. The following variations of this view are the most familiar:—

(a) Augustine thought that this kingdom began with the time of the Apostle John, consequently in the latter half of the first century. Luther was of the same opinion; but he also tried to fix its termination and set it down at the time of Pope Gregory VII. (*ob.* 1085), the pope with whom the papacy “became thoroughly antichristian.” This Antichrist (the papacy) was to prevail for 666 years (the number of Antichrist in Rev. xiii. 18); thereafter

Gog and Magog (the Turks) were to vent their fury for a short season, and then the Judgment was to come.

Here it will be observed the millennial kingdom is set before Antichrist, directly contradictory to the Revelation.

(b) The majority of Lutheran dogmatic theologians set down the millennial kingdom as extending from 300–1300 A.D.; consequently, when the Church was set free from persecutions and shortly afterwards became the State Church, then came the millennial kingdom. Its close, at the year 1300, was conditioned by its beginning at the year 300. Moreover, at that period the Turks certainly pushed towards the West.

According to both of these views the darkest period of the Middle Ages comes during the supremacy of this kingdom. The latter represents it as existing for a long time along with the papacy, which, according both to Luther and our old Fathers, was Antichrist. That this is irreconcilable with the Revelation is undoubted; for there Antichrist is judged before the kingdom commences. When some of the previously mentioned "contemporary-history" expositors of the Revelation (*i.e.* expositors who refer its substance to the author's own day) came to practically the same result, that was from their standpoint quite consistent. For if the pagan emperors were Antichrists, then it was quite natural that the millennial kingdom should be supposed to begin when the Emperor of Rome became a Christian. Hengstenberg refers the millennial kingdom to the years 800–1800. It began with the Emperor Charlemagne; for then the German Empire was set up. And it ceased at the fall of the German Empire in 1806. To a non-German it is not very manifest why the millennial kingdom should be connected with the German imperial dignity. On the whole, this view can scarcely be considered as anything else and more than an original conceit.

Most "old-orthodox Lutherans" still cling to the view referred to under (a). But they utterly fail to reconcile it with the words of the Revelation. This is clearly seen when we examine the reasons for their attitude which the best of them in modern times have endeavoured to supply. We need only refer to the last part (vi.) of Philippi's *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre*, and Keil's argument in his commentary on Ezekiel. Kliefoth must be reckoned among those who have partially apostatized, since he has found himself compelled to give up the view that the pope is Antichrist, even although he makes a desperate attempt to be "Lutheran" with respect to "the millennial kingdom" (*Eschatologie*, pp. 147–225).

When the representatives of this view imagine that they can make up for the dearth of Biblical proof for their standpoint by appeal to a sentence in the Lutheran symbolic books,* it has with reason been answered that this passage only touches the coarsely sensual Chiliasm moulded by Jewish conceptions.

Finally, we observe that some able Lutheran theologians (*e.g.* Thomasius, *Dogm.* III. ii., p. 279) do not express approval of any of these views, but let the question alone as being unsolved, and by them unsolvable. That is certainly

* *Augustana*, Art. 17, where the view is condemned, that "Before the resurrection of the dead the really sainted and pious will have a temporal kingdom and will root out all the ungodly" (according to the German text; the Latin runs somewhat differently).

the most convenient and most cautious plan. But it does not help to throw any light upon the subject.*

NOTE II

Has Chiliasm any practical significance? This question must undoubtedly be answered in the affirmative. But to a certain extent this significance is not so great as the most zealous Chiliasts have been anxious to make out; and to some extent Chiliasm is like a two-edged sword which can cut both ways. For it may do harm as well as good. It depends on what kind of Chiliasm it is.

There can be no doubt that a coarsely sensual Chiliasm, such as that of the Jews and Papias, only does damage, since it fosters and increases men's desire for external glory and carnal pleasure, by holding up to view a prelude of glory where such pleasure will play a prominent part. The same thing may be said to be true of the Chiliasm which makes it appear that the glorified in the millennial kingdom will rule over those not yet glorified. This expectation might easily lead to the fostering of spiritual pride. Still, any view which makes participation in the millennial kingdom a distinction for some individuals involves dangers. For it is then so easy to forget the main thing, salvation or perdition; and this thought is chiefly directed to securing the great privilege of participating in the first resurrection. And when anyone feels assured that he will share in it, it is a great temptation to exalt himself above and look down upon ordinary Christians, who no doubt may be glorified in their due time, but still only at the Last Judgment. If, on the other hand, it is assumed that all true believers will share in that glory, the danger for those ambitious of position will at the outset be eliminated.

And then it has been seen that Chiliasts are apt to allow their minds to become so engrossed with this expectation that they will hardly speak of anything else. Faith and charity are forced to the side by the hope of the glory they dream of,—and that is not healthy.

But if we avoid all these rocks, the expectation of the millennial kingdom may be full of blessing to us. It attunes our hearts to increased gratitude to God for giving us a glimpse not merely of eternal bliss itself, but even of the various steps and intermediate stages through which it is to be reached, and that not for the individual alone, but also for the whole Church. It is as if the future salvation were approaching nearer and becoming clearer to us, having more reality, more flesh and blood, and more definite outline,—and that again

* For a more exhaustive discussion of Chiliasm, exegetically, dogmatically, and historically, we must refer the reader to special works on the subject. Of such we have two from the Church standpoint, viz., E. F. Eckhoff's *Fire Foredrag om det tusindaarige Rige* (Four Lectures on the Millennial Kingdom), (Bergen 1886), and Grönsdal's *Christi Gjenkomst til Tusindaarsriget* (Christ's Coming for the Millennial Kingdom) (Bergen 1887), of which the former gives copious and valuable information regarding the history of the question, whilst the latter discusses in detail many passages of Scripture which are supposed to throw light upon the subject. Of foreign special treatises which we have consulted,—frequently with meagre results,—we may mention Dr. Cumming's *Millennial Rest*, Lyon's *Millennial Studies*, Koch's *Das tausend-jährige Reich*, Chiappelli's *Le Idee Millenarie Dei Christiani* (chiefly historical), and others, as well as the various expositions of the Revelation.

helps to fire us to strenuous struggle for the treasure. This is certainly the purpose God has had when through His Word He has so far lifted the veil from the future and vouchsafed to us a glimpse of those things. We may be sure that He has not done this without some wise purpose. It is not merely to satisfy our curiosity or aid us to a knowledge which cannot be of any practical benefit. It is contrary to the whole nature of the Revelation to trouble itself with useless theories.

But if we are to prevent our Chiliasm from becoming sickly and begetting sickly expectation, we must steadfastly maintain that the great matter for us is not these intermediate stages, but eternal bliss or everlasting woe.

3. THE LAST CONFLICT

After the thousand years the devil is to be loosed for a "little season" (Rev. xx. 3). This respite he at once employs to "deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth," Gog and Magog, and gather them together to battle, —an army as numerous as the sands of the sea. With this host he advances and encompasses "the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." But no real battle takes place here; for fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours the whole hostile force, and the devil himself at last receives his doom (Rev. xx. 7-10).

As we have tried to show at an earlier stage, we must suppose that after the judgment upon Antichrist, and the removal of the glorified, there is formed again a Christian Church upon the earth. This Church, on account of the special circumstances under which it lives and works (judgment upon Antichrist and his kingdom being fresh in men's memories, and the devil being in bonds), must be supposed to attain a high degree of prosperity. Against it the devil, now set free again, turns with all his diabolic power. It seems as if, during these thousand years when he has been left alone with his wickedness, he has been storing up an infinity of venom and gall which he will now belch forth upon the believing Church on earth. But since he is a spirit, he must, in order to be able to afflict the Church with external tribulations, now, as previously in the time of Antichrist, betake himself to human instruments. Such instruments he finds in the tribes at the extremities of the earth. Certainly some have thought that here there is reference not to any-

thing local, but only to those who have stood further away from the Church, been less affected by its spiritual life. But yet the expression seems chiefly to indicate those who, both spiritually and locally, have stood far apart from the Church. It will then be the case that there is a civilized world, in the midst of which the Church has also its centre, and into the remoter extremities of the earth its influence has probably least penetrated. Here, however, the main thing is that these tribes and individuals in a spiritual respect have kept themselves aloof from the Church of God.

When those nations are designated "Gog and Magog," that is an expression which is evidently borrowed from the well-known prophecy concerning Gog and Magog in Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. In these chapters the prophet describes how Gog and Magog,¹ and a great multitude of other heathen races, Persians, Ethiopians, North Africans, Armenians (the house of Togarmah), will, in the distant future, fight against the people of God, but be miserably put to shame, since the Lord Himself will fall upon and destroy them. When this assault is designated by the prophet as the last before the glorifying of God's people, which he in chapter xl. begins to sketch, it is quite natural that the Revelation utilizes this prophecy as the background for its picture of the last attack to which the kingdom of God will be subjected by its enemies upon the earth.

These hosts Satan will lead against the Church of God. There is nothing said about what success this army will have. But since it "goes up on the breadth of the earth" (*i.e.* advances towards Jerusalem), and reaches so far as the beloved city, it must at the beginning have developed a considerable power, and forced the people of God back into their metropolis. For there can be no doubt that the "beloved city" occupies such a position in the Church of God's people. On the other hand, there may be doubt whether that is the

¹ In Ezekiel, God is actually represented as king over Magog. The original significance of these words is unknown; but from the context it is at least clear that Magog, in Ezekiel, means remote nations in the extreme North (to the north of the Caucasian Mountains). It therefore suits well enough as a designation for what the Revelation wishes to express, remote nations at the extremities of the civilized world (*cf.* Gen. x. 2; 1 Chron. i. 5).

re-built Jerusalem, as many have thought. It is certainly true that the expressions unconsciously call that city to mind. It was indeed the city specially loved by God, where His habitation so long had been, and in the Book of Sirach it is called "a beloved city" (Sir. xxiv. 11). In the same direction also points the expression, "go up" (Rev. xx. 9), which is generally used of approaching Jerusalem, situated as it is on a mountain. But that need only signify that this Church's capital is described by expressions which are borrowed from the circumstances of the old covenant, just as the heavenly city, in Revelation xxi. 2, is described as the New Jerusalem, although in that passage there is no reference whatever to a restored Jerusalem.

This city, which is full of well-armed, sainted warriors, and is therefore described as "the camp of the saints,"¹ is encompassed now by enemies who are instigated, debauched and commanded by the devil. But here the Lord Himself sets a bound to their assault. The holy city is the bulwark against which the assault is broken. In this there is a fulfilment of what is said in a cognate prediction, in the Prophet Zechariah (xii. 2-6), of Jerusalem: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about; . . . I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. . . . I will make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem" (*i.e.* continue to stand unshaken). Who does not naturally here think of the last conflict, which will be closed by fire from heaven destroying the hostile forces fighting against the beloved city? (Rev. xx. 9).

And now, too, the devil receives his final doom. He has certainly been kept in everlasting chains under darkness unto

¹ Probably the city and the camp are only two expressions implying identically the same thing, a hendiadys, a figure of speech somewhat common in Scripture.

the judgment of the great day (Jude 6 ; 2 Pet. ii. 4). Now this judgment has come and he is its first victim. He is cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet already have their place. Whether this place is different from the abyss, the bottomless pit, the devil's former place of habitation, is disputed. But it is, at any rate, the place of torment appointed for him and the damned throughout eternity,—the “everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

III

THE END

BUT all these have been merely steps in the development. Now, however, comes the Last Judgment, and with it the end of the whole history of salvation. Under the title of "The End" we include the last appearance of the Lord upon the unglorified earth, the general resurrection, everlasting death, the transfiguration of nature, and eternal life.

These points can be more briefly touched upon, seeing that here we find ourselves on more familiar ground. They are mostly subjects with which in early days our catechism made us more or less acquainted. Consequently they are not so strange to us as some of the questions we have hitherto had to devote attention to. They are certainly not so much disputed; and they are in themselves much clearer, for the Word of God sheds more light upon this final end than upon all the intermediate stages, because it is infinitely more important than any of these stages.

1. THE LORD'S APPEARING

We say purposely "the Lord's appearing," and not His return; for whilst it is nowhere expressly said that after His coming to judgment upon Antichrist, He withdrew to heaven again and now returns to the earth,—although, as has been previously indicated, we believe we have reason to assume this,—yet it is incontestable that He, in Revelation xx. 11, for the first time again appears upon the earth. This

appearing of His, then, we regard as His *last* coming, His actual *παρουσία*, His coming for that day which in Scripture is generally designated "the day of the Lord." But we are to understand this so that everything which is said concerning the coming of the Lord outside of the Book of Revelation holds good, both of this, His last appearing, and of His coming to judgment over Antichrist, since both blend together, both are seen under one image. It is in the Revelation that these for the first time fall apart from each other, and even that not really in the expressions,—for it is not said here that He comes twice—but in the action itself, since He first appears as the judge of Antichrist (Rev. xix. 11–21), then disappears for a time, and finally (Rev. xx. 10–15) appears anew as the judge of the devil and the whole world.

Concerning this "day of the Lord," Scripture speaks in many places. Yet it must be observed that in the Old Testament it is not merely the double coming at the time of the end that is at hand; and here His coming in the flesh and His coming to judgment are mostly so connected with each other that they seem to combine, and there are even passages which seem to combine both with some historic judgment or other—some great judgment of God. We have previously referred to the Prophet Joel (ii., iii.) as a striking example of this. First, a present or immediately forthcoming judgment¹ is designated "the day of the Lord" (Joel ii. 1–11, ii. 16 *et seq.*). Then there is a reference to the pentecostal effusion of the Spirit at the beginning of the New Testament age (Joel iii. 1, 2; *cf.* Acts ii. 16–21), and in immediate connection with this we have a prediction of the Judgment Day, "the day of the Lord, . . . great and very terrible" (Joel ii. 3–11).²

¹ Whether this is a destructive swarm of grasshoppers or a hostile army, or both, expositors, as is well known, still dispute.

² *Cf.* passages such as Isaiah xiii. 6 *et seq.*; Ezekiel xiii. 5; Amos v. 18–20; Zephaniah i. 7 *et seq.*, ii. 2–15, where also "the day of the Lord" only designates a great day of judgment and decision within the region of history. In the Prophet Malachi "the day of the Lord" designates chiefly His coming in the flesh, yet so that this is regarded as a coming to judgment, consequently the prediction likewise contains characteristic features of the Judgment's great and last day (Mal. iii. 4).

In the New Testament things are somewhat different. Christ had now come in the flesh, consequently "the day of the Lord" could no longer designate that first coming of His. And, if we except that in Matthew xxiv., xxv. we have a prophecy in which it is difficult to separate that which refers to the destruction of Jerusalem from that which treats of the end of the world and the Last Judgment, there is no hint (at least outside of the Revelation) that in the eyes of men great judgments in history will coalesce with the Judgment at the time of the end. It is only the two steps in this judgment (the judgment upon Antichrist and the judgment upon all) which are never kept distinct from each other except in the Revelation. But these two, undoubtedly, in all the other prophecies, blend together and are designated as the coming of the Lord, the manifestation of the Lord, the day of the Lord, the Day of Judgment, etc.¹

References to this last coming of the Lord are frequent, and it is so described that the very signs that will precede and accompany the coming are specified.

Previous to the appearing of the Lord, great and terrible

¹ The New Testament expressions for this event are—

1. *The coming of the Lord* (*παρουσία*, Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15, v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1; Jas. v. 7, 8; 2 Pet. iii. 4; 1 John ii. 28) or *the coming of the day of God* (2 Pet. iii. 12).

2. *The revelation or appearing of the Lord* (*ἀποκάλυψις*, 1 Pet. i. 7, 13, iv. 13; 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 7).

3. *The appearing of the Lord*, with the secondary meaning of glory, (*ἐπιφάνεια*, Tit. ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 1-8).

By the first expression, the coming of the Lord is described without any colour at all; by the second it is set forth as an uncovering of something that previously was concealed; and by the third is implied that what this uncovering brings to light is something glorious.

The time when this is to happen is designated "the day of the Lord" (1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10); "the day of Christ" (2 Thess. ii. 2; Phil. i. 6); "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 8); "the day of God" (2 Pet. iii. 12); "the last day" (John vi. 39, 44, 54); "the great day" (Jude 6); "the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment" (2 Pet. ii. 9).

Sometimes it is also merely designated as "that day" (2 Thess. i. 10; 2 Tim. i. 12-18), or simply as "the day" (1 Cor. iii. 13), since to the eyes of the first Christians it appeared so vividly as the great day, the day prominent beyond all others, that this designation was enough. There could be, to their thoughts, no confusing of this day with any other day. That was *the day*, just as the Bible was *the Book* (Bible itself means book); both towered above everything else of the same name.

events in nature and in the human world will take place, but they are referred to in such a way that it is very difficult to separate the reality from the image, the facts from the figure.

Even the old prophets refer to the coming of the Lord as something terrible, which will be accompanied by great wonders in nature. Joel speaks of "wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel ii. 30, 31). "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (iii. 15). Isaiah speaks of a time ("in the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger") when the Lord "will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place" (Isa. xiii. 13), when the earth will be "utterly broken down, . . . clean dissolved, . . . moved exceedingly, . . . shall reel to and fro like a drunkard" (Isa. xxiv. 19, 20). "The Lord of hosts . . . will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land" (Hag. ii. 6; *cf.* Heb. xii. 26).

In the New Testament we find kindred expressions in our Lord's own utterances (*vide* especially Matt. xxiv. 29, 30; Mark xiii. 22-26). Here, too, there is mention of great convulsions in the kingdom of nature. The sun will be darkened and the moon withhold its light; the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens be shaken; in a word, all nature will be in confusion, and in the human world there will be a similar disturbance. It is very probable that the predictions concerning the "false prophets" and "false Christs" who will "show signs and wonders" (Mark xiii. 22), also concerning "wars, and rumours of wars" (Matt. xxiv. 6), do not really refer to the time immediately before the last coming of the Lord, but reach their fulfilment in the time of Antichrist.¹ When, however, it is said, in immediate connection with these wonders of nature, that "then shall all the

¹ The same is also true of Luke xxi. 9 *et seq.*, where there is mention of wars and commotions, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, fearful sights and great signs from heaven—in so far as these words had not their immediate fulfilment at the destruction of Jerusalem.

tribes of the earth mourn" (Matt. xxiv. 30), that "there shall be . . . upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; . . . men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke xxi. 25, 26),—there can be less reason to doubt that this refers to the Lord's last coming, since there is immediately added: "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (xxi. 27).

There are, however, some considerations which give rise to difficulties in the interpretation of these and kindred passages.

As concerns the passages quoted from the Old Testament, it may be said that these are so connected with certain historic judgments that it is always difficult to determine definitely what and how much of these utterances is to be referred to the Last Day, however well the passages according to their wording seem to suit it, for it is evident that the times of severe judgments and great tribulations are often pictured in colours which have been borrowed from the great Day of Judgment (*vide, e.g.*, passages such as Jer. iv. 23; Isa. v. 30, viii. 22; Amos viii. 9; Mic. iii. 6). And in the sayings of our Saviour the Judgment on the whole earth is so interwoven with the announcement of the coming doom of Jerusalem (its destruction), that scarcely anyone has yet clearly and in all details succeeded in separating the one from the other.¹ In any case, the features to which we have been calling attention seem naturally to refer to the last coming of Christ.

Then with reference to the natural wonders specified, it is undoubtedly a question whether they are to be regarded literally. Certainly it is *per se* no far-fetched thought that nature itself at the last coming of Christ will begin to move and prepare for transformation. But yet it seems as if traces of the very transformation indicated were removed back to the period before the Judgment, whilst in reality it will only first take place after the Judgment, or, at any rate, only contemporaneously with it. But at all events it is, as is here

¹ Kliefoth (*Eschatologie*, p. 131) makes such an attempt,—as others have done before him,—but it can hardly be said that he has been successful.

foreshadowed, of such a nature that we cannot form any clear idea of it until we see it.

Immediately after these wonders have begun "shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven" (Matt. xxiv. 30). Now what is that sign?

We know nothing with certainty regarding it. Many conjectures have been made.¹ The oldest and most widespread view, which also satisfies us best, is that it is a radiant cross which will be seen upon the vault of heaven immediately before the Lord Himself appears. The cross is in a special sense the sign of Christ. It was on that He died for the sin of the world. The gospel of salvation is above all a "preaching of the cross" (1 Cor. i. 18), a preaching of Christ crucified and risen again (1 Cor. i. 23, ii. 2; Gal. iii. 1). It is under the banner of the cross that the Church has fought and won, and it is by "the blood of the cross" (Col. i. 20) that redeemed sinners look for mercy at the Judgment Day.

That, then, is what the most of the ancient Church Fathers understood by the sign. "The true sign which is characteristic of Christ is the cross. The sign of a shining cross goes before the king, in order to indicate the coming of the Crucified One." "The sign of the cross is to inspire His foes with terror, but His friends with joy."² "The sign of the cross will rise in the East and go towards the West, more radiant than the sun, and proclaim the coming and appearing of the Judge."³

¹ We have no space for any minute reference to these various views concerning what this sign is. We must confine ourselves to merely enumerating the most important of them. (1) Christ Himself, who in Scripture is called a sign (Luke ii. 34). (2) The Cross. (3) The cloud on which the Lord sits. (4) A radiant banner like that usually carried in the van of a triumphal procession. (5) The brightness of glory which surrounds the Lord Himself. (6) A new and extraordinary star which will remind the nations of the earth of the "star of Jacob" (Num. xxiv. 17), and of the star which went before the Magi, heralding the first coming of the Lord (Matt. ii. 2). (7) A radiance preceding the Lord.

All we learn clearly from the text itself is that there is something which (*a*) is different from the Lord Himself, (*b*) precedes His own personal appearing, (*c*) is so extraordinary, striking, and overpowering, that all who see it understand that it is the sign of His coming.

² Cyril's *Catech.*, 15, 22.

³ Hippolytus, *De Fine Mundi*, sec. 36.

The natural wonders and the sign in combination will fill with an indescribable terror all who are unprepared (Luke xxi. 25, 26); this terror will give itself expression in a great lament (Matt. xxiv. 30). But to the true disciples of the Lord it will be a sign that brings great gladness. With large expectation will they lift up their heads, assured that their redemption draweth nigh (Luke xxi. 28).

Immediately after the sign the Lord Himself will appear in person. In what form? Evidently as the Son of Man; for it is as such He has redeemed the world, and it is as such that He has received authority to execute judgment (John v. 27). Moreover, that was also pointed out at His ascension, for it was expressly said to His disciples: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). His form will therefore be the same as when He left the earth, a glorified human form. And since He, as the glorified One, still bore the marks of the nails with which He was fastened to the cross, and of the wound in His side (John xx. 25-27), many have thought that these marks will also show themselves in His glorified body when He comes again as Judge. These are the signs of His victory; for it is by suffering that He has been victorious over sin and Satan.

There is yet another sense in which there will be a similarity between His ascension and His return; for as a cloud at that time took Him away from the sight of the disciples, so He will now appear sitting on a cloud (*cf.* Dan. vii. 13); for doubtless the meaning of that expression is that He will "come in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64) or "in a cloud" (Luke xxi. 27).

And He will be revealed "with power and great glory." Even in the days of His flesh that glory could break through the veil of His humiliation, as at the transfiguration on the Mount, and then the disciples beheld His glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." But it is in another glory He will now be revealed. It is the glory of the glorified Son of Man, and the glory of the Father from whom He has proceeded (Matt. xvi. 27). Now for the first time can men "see Him as He is," and so

this last coming of His is called His "glorious appearing" (*ἐπιφάνεια*. *Vide* note on p. 393). We must imagine Him as surrounded by an indescribable splendour which no human eye can bear to look upon. The cloud which He sits upon is also so indescribably glorious that even those marvellous clouds which robe the sky at sunrise or sunset pale and fade into nothingness when compared with this divine, glorious cloud (*cf.* 2 Thess. i. 10).

And innumerable hosts of angels accompany Him. It is repeated and emphasized that He comes with "His holy angels" (Matt. xvi. 27, xxv. 31; Luke ix. 26), "His mighty angels" (2 Thess. i. 7, 8). They are at once His guard of honour, His heralds and His ministers. They have served Him already during His earthly life (Matt. iv. 11), now shall they, worshipping, accompany Him (Heb. i. 6) to the great assembly at which the collected result of all His work of salvation will appear, and they shall execute His behests.

2. THE RESURRECTION

When the Lord comes in His glory His voice will be heard over every grave upon the earth, and at the sound of His voice the dead will awake. Now the time has come of which the Lord spoke when He said: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life: and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28, 29). That is the general resurrection to which the Apostle Paul also refers as "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15). It is this second and last resurrection which is described for us in Revelation xx. 13, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them" (*i.e.* death had to give up the bodies, and the kingdom of death the souls, in order that both together might appear before the Judge). Of this resurrection of the body we shall now speak further.

The doctrine concerning the resurrection of the body is based exclusively on a divine revelation. The heathen who

had no revelation frequently supposed—as we have already shown—that the soul was immortal ; but that it should again be reunited to the body was to them an exceedingly absurd and inconceivable thought,¹ and there was nothing in Christianity on which the old Greeks and Romans heaped more ridicule than the doctrine of the resurrection.²

Even in the Old Testament we meet with germs of the doctrine of the resurrection, and in the later books it appears in considerably developed form, as has been indicated previously (*vide* p. 108). Here we merely recall anew the fact that it is in Daniel xii. 2 that we first find a clear declaration that both the godly and ungodly will rise in order to participate in the state that answers to their character. But even here it is practically only the resurrection of Israel, and not of the heathen, that is referred to. Concerning the resurrection of the heathen the Old Testament is silent, if we do not see a reference to it in Isaiah xxiv. 22, where it is said that “the kings of the earth . . . shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison (the kingdom of death), and after many days shall they be visited”; the latter expression, in and by itself, may mean that they will be brought forth to judgment, which again would presuppose their resurrection. But the passage is very obscure and much disputed.³

At the time of Christ the doctrine of the resurrection was held firmly by the Pharisees (Acts xxiii. 8), whilst the Sadducees denied it (Matt. xxii. 23). But they seem never to have thought of a resurrection of all people ; on the con-

¹ Undoubtedly it has been asserted that there have been heathen tribes which have had a kind of idea of the resurrection of the body. But all that, *e.g.*, Lücke (*Traditionen des Menschengeschlechts*, pp. 446 *et seq.*) can quote in support of such a supposition is a few exceedingly confused notions which mainly tend in the direction of a migration of souls. We quite disregard the Mohammedans, who, without doubt, teach a general resurrection of the dead, but, as is well known, they derived this doctrine, as well as many others, from the New Testament.

² Nearly all the apologists of the ancient Church devote more or less attention to this subject, and seek to meet the objections of the heathen to, and to reprobate their ungodly mockery of, the doctrine of the resurrection.

³ On this point reference may be made to the expositors, and especially to Professor Buhl's *Commentary*, pp. 372, 373.

trary, the resurrection was regarded as a prerogative of Israel as God's chosen people, whilst the heathen races were to remain in the kingdom of death and receive their judgment there, and possibly be altogether annihilated there. And on this standpoint later Judaism still remains.¹

But it is very different in the New Testament. In it the doctrine of the resurrection everywhere has its place as an unchallengeable truth based on Christ's own resurrection, and every doubt in this respect is rejected in the most decided manner. Yet there were some doubters. Thus in Corinth some denied that the dead rose (1 Cor. xv. 12). And in Ephesus, Hymenæus and Philetus had given currency to the doctrine that the dead had already risen (*i.e.* that there is no other resurrection than the spiritual), and they found many supporters; for their error is designated as one which "will eat as doth a canker" (2 Tim. ii. 16-18). But the Christian Church as a Church rejected every such error and maintained the truth.

Nor is it accidental that the doctrine of the resurrection first with Christ attains its full development and assumes a definite form; for He is its firm foundation. It is He Himself who says: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John xi. 25). And the truth of this He proved not merely by raising the dead, but chiefly by this, that He Himself broke the seal of the grave, and became the first-fruits of the resurrected (1 Cor. xv. 23). Thus He has prepared the way of resurrection for the whole race, whose representative, as the second Adam, He is. By paying the wages of sin for the whole world He "brought life and immortality to light" (2 Tim. i. 10), and deprived death of its right to keep mankind in thrall.

The Saviour shows clearly to the Sadducees that the resurrection is indirectly taught in the Pentateuch itself, since God there calls Himself the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, even after these patriarchs had been long dead, and thereby shows that they are alive, and He promises that one day they shall arise (Matt. xxii. 29-32;

¹ *Vide* hereon Weber, *System der altsynog. paläst. Theol.*, pp. 372 *et seq.*; Eisenmenger, *Entd. Jud.*, i. pp. 904-7; Buxtorf, *Synog. Jud.*, chap. iii.

Luke xx. 27-38). And He certainly strongly maintained that both the good and the evil will arise, the former to life and the latter to perdition (John v. 29); in other words, there will be a general resurrection (John v. 28, "all that are in the graves"). But the resurrection *per se* in His opinion is of so very little importance that it is only the resurrection to life that He deems of any value; consequently He merely designates this as the resurrection, since He is speaking of such as "shall be accounted worthy to obtain that resurrection," and he says they are "the children of God," who are likewise "the children of the resurrection" (Luke xx. 35, 36).

On the ground of Christ's utterances regarding the resurrection, as well as of His own personal resurrection, the apostles taught that there is to be a resurrection of all the dead; indeed, they lay special emphasis both on the Lord's own resurrection,—the sealing of the redemption,—and on the resurrection of the dead. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead," says Paul, "both of the just and unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15). Still they dwell principally, like the Lord Himself, on the resurrection of the righteous, because it is this which chiefly concerns Christians, and can afford them consolation in time of tribulation.

This resurrection of the dead they invariably base upon the resurrection and instrumentality of Jesus. It is on His work that it rests, and it is by Him that it is affected. The Saviour Himself had repeatedly said of him who believed on Him, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40, 44, 54).

And of the disciples it was significantly said that they "preached, through Jesus, the resurrection from the dead" (Acts iv. 2). The Apostle Paul also refers the resurrection to God, but yet in intimate connection with Christ and the Holy Spirit. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). It is our living connection with the risen Christ, effected by the Spirit, which is our great, our secure pledge, that we too shall

rise, yea, rise to life. "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 14). "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power" (1 Cor. vi. 14); and it was because they knew not "the power of God" that the Sadducees denied the resurrection (Matt. xxii. 29). It is this instrumentality of Christ in the resurrection that Paul so thoroughly unfolds in 1 Corinthians xv. 12 *et seq.*, which is the actual warrant for the Christian doctrine of the resurrection (*vide* especially verses 12-20).

If we were asked to set forth the reasons for the doctrine that Jesus is the instrument of the resurrection, we should say, in the first place, that it is based on the assurance that Jesus is the agent through whom the whole creation was effected (John i. 3), and the resurrection in a sense is just a new creation. In the next place, Christ is the author of our new birth, and the resurrection is the regeneration of the whole world. And again, Christ, by His resurrection, has broken the seal of the grave, and thereby opened the way out of the grave for all (Acts xxvi. 23; Col. i. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 20; Rev. i. 5). Finally, He is the head of the race. Where the head goes before, the members follow after, with a necessity arising from the very nature of the case.

But even if the resurrection may thus mainly be referred to Jesus, it is not to be understood by this that the Father has no hand in it. On the contrary, here the words of Jesus hold true: "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John v. 21). The resurrection is thus sometimes attributed to Christ (Phil. iii. 20, 21) and sometimes to God (2 Cor. iv. 14). Both co-operate in it. The same is likewise true of the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 11). It is therefore most correct to say that the resurrection is effected by the Triune God, through Christ, as the Church has universally expressed it. It holds true of this, as of all God's acts in the history of salvation, that it is effected by the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit.¹

¹ A difficulty faces us here. If our resurrection, according to Scripture, is founded on our living fellowship with the risen Christ, does it not then

There are those who have connected the resurrection of believers with Christ in an extraordinary manner. For some have seen in His body and blood, of which they partake in the Lord's Supper, the germs of the resurrection body (so, many of the Fathers and several modern writers). Others have asserted that by Christ we receive the Holy Ghost, which initiates our body into immortality, and fills it with powers that in the glorified body first attain their full development. With this also some have connected the idea that this glorified body, the germ of which was deposited in us through the Supper and the communication of the

follow that they who do not stand in any such living fellowship will not arise?

To this it must be answered :—

1. It is not merely our resurrection, but our resurrection to life, which is based upon our living fellowship with Christ. But since it is only this latter resurrection which is the consolation of Christians, Scripture rightly enough generally speaks of it even when its utterances, so far as the form is concerned, seem to refer to the resurrection as a whole.

2. Even the resurrection of the ungodly is based on the resurrection of Christ as the sealing of His redemptive work; for if He, as the second Adam, is the Head of the whole race, He is, as such, the representative of all men, both in His passion and in His resurrection. Just as He atoned for all, so He also broke the seal of the grave for all. With this also accords the apostle's words when he says: "Since by man" (*i.e.* Adam) "came death, by man" (*i.e.* Christ, "the last Adam," 1 Cor. xv. 45) "came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22). We cannot therefore quite agree with Philippi when he, in direct opposition to the clear meaning of these words of the apostle, and against the best of the expositors, declares that the faithful rise in virtue of the resurrection of Jesus, but the unbelieving in virtue of "an immutable, divine decree" (Philippi, *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre*, vi. p. 93).

Besides, it must be remembered that the ungodly rise for reckoning and judgment; but this judgment will be passed according to their relation to Christ's redemption, to which His resurrection is the copestone; and this, again, as we have seen, seems to presuppose that they have had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with it.

Finally, it is to be observed that some, failing to appreciate this fact, have either asserted that the ungodly will not arise at all (in direct opposition to John v. 28; Acts xxiv. 15; Rev. xx. 13), or even (like Karstens, *Letz. Dinge*, p. 120) assumed that they only arise in order to be annihilated. This doctrine of final annihilation, with or without previous resurrection, has, especially in England, under the name of Annihilationism, found many supporters; but we shall have cause to refer to this again when we come to the question of Eternal Punishment.

Spirit, gradually develops and shapes itself in the period between death and doomsday, so that the resurrection is really only its completion and final manifestation. But none of these views finds any support in Scripture, which distinctly designates the resurrection as something which takes place in a moment (1 Cor. xv. 22), by an exertion of divine power, not as the product of a long natural process.

When will this resurrection take place? At the Lord's coming, Scripture answers (1 Cor. xv. 23; Phil. iii. 20, 21; *cf.* John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54; 1 Cor. xv. 52). And it must be acknowledged that this generally appears in the New Testament as a single coming. We have already tried to show, however, that, according to the account of the Revelation, it must, in a sense, fall into two parts, one before and one after the millennial kingdom. There is a corresponding double resurrection, one before and one after the millennium. The former is called expressly "the first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 5), and has previously been dealt with. The latter is not called "the last," but yet it is in the same passage indirectly designated as such by the words: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"; and it has its place assigned after the millennial kingdom (Rev. xx. 13). It is with the latter or last resurrection we have here to do, yet so that everything concerning the resurrection in general (*e.g.*, the reason and manner of it) is applicable to both.

That there is, in 1 Corinthians xv. 23, a hint of a double resurrection—although there is no reference to a double coming of the Lord—we have formerly tried to show. In the Gospels there is really no hint of such, yet the description of the Lord's coming is so set forth that it equally suits His coming to judgment over Antichrist, and His coming for the Last Judgment. It is certainly strange that here, as in 1 Thessalonians iv. 14, there is only mention of the gathering in of the elect to the Lord (Matt. xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 27). This exactly suits "the first resurrection" at the Lord's coming to judgment over Antichrist (Rev. xix. 11–xx. 6), just as, in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1, the coming of Christ and "our gathering together unto Him" are placed in immediate connection

with the judgment over Antichrist. The resurrection will first take place at the advent of Christ; that, according to the Scripture, is certain. But each of these two events is the coming again of Christ. First, they blend together into one in the prophetic vision; but at last, in the Revelation, they are kept quite distinct from each other.

We have now seen that the resurrection is distinctly hinted at even in the Old Testament, and that it is clearly and indisputably maintained in the New; in the next place, that it affects all the dead; then that, according to Scripture, it is a miracle which is effected by the Triune God, through Christ, with whose own resurrection it stands in the most intimate connection; finally, that it will first take place when the Lord comes, whether by this coming we think of His first coming to judgment upon Antichrist and his followers (the first resurrection), or His last coming to judgment upon the whole creation (the general resurrection).

That unbelief, both in former days and in modern times, has raised objections to this and designated it as impossible, does not trouble us, for as believing Christians we maintain that with God nothing is impossible (Gen. xviii. 14; Jer. xxxii. 17 Zech. viii. 6; Matt. xix. 26). "The power of God," according to which the resurrection is to take place, is for us guarantee enough that it can take place. In the face of all objections of this kind we refer confidently to the omnipotence of God. Is it impossible for Him who created everything from nothing to raise up the dead? Why should not He who is "the fountain of life" be able to give life when He pleases? And that He will give life He has informed us in His Word, as we in the preceding pages have seen. And if we first know that such is His will, we can say confidently with the psalmist, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that hath He done, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps" (Ps cxxxv. 6 R.V.).

But this confident assurance of ours does not prevent us from suggesting the question: Why does God wish it? In other words, Why is the resurrection necessary? Why is the body to rise at all? Is it not enough that the soul enjoys bliss with God?

To this it must be answered, that without the resurrection man throughout eternity would fail to be what, according to his nature, he is—a being composed of two parts, soul and body. Men would then be identical with the angels, who are pure spirits. But in that case God's creator-thought in regard to man would not come to its own. It would never realize its idea and so would not attain its end, which is, and, according to the nature of the case, must be, that God's idea may be realized absolutely. It would then appear as if God, when He created man with a body, had made a mistake which He afterwards had to rectify by letting the body disappear for ever, leaving no trace behind. But God never makes mistakes; and therefore He never creates anything without, but always with, a purpose, and that a purpose which may and can be attained, provided that the being which He has endowed with liberty (thereby voluntarily limiting Himself) does not miss the goal; and certainly the goal of bliss is missed so far as they are concerned who are damned. The raising up of the body does not lie in the ethical but in the physical domain, and is therefore practically independent of the condition of the soul of the individual.

Besides, it is significant that it is the whole man, which during the lifetime has served God or the devil, and therefore the whole man must be presented before God at the Judgment, and participate in the condition which will be the eternal lot of the individual concerned.¹

People generally speak about the "resurrection of the body." Yet Scripture most frequently mentions "the resurrection of the dead," consequently of the whole person. It is the whole person which rises, but in reality chiefly according to its bodily part, as it is the body which now first receives a new form; but still this does not exhaust the conception of the resurrection; for the resurrection also includes the reunion of the soul with the body. Both must be understood to take place at the same time, in a moment, when the Lord comes and the last trumpet sounds (1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 16).

¹ Cf. the brilliant utterances on this subject by Tertullian in chaps. 14, 15 of his book on *The Resurrection of the Body*.

Now we come to the great question of the nature of the resurrection body.

This question can be so put that it becomes "foolishness." In such a way it may have been asked in Corinth when the apostle begins the answer to his questioner by exclaiming "Thou fool!" (1 Cor. xv. 35, 36). There they seem to have imagined that the body that arises will be exactly the same body that was deposited in the grave. This the apostle dismissed by an analogy borrowed from the seed which is deposited in the soil. It is not that very seed which comes up again as a new plant; on the contrary, that seed dies in the earth and there springs up a plant of the same kind as that to which the seed belonged. So it is also with the resurrection body. The body which is buried is a seed which is laid in the earth and decays, but from that springs up in due time a new plant, the resurrection body. This is undoubtedly of the same kind as the seed (a human body), but yet so different from the old that its derivation from it must be regarded as an act of creation by God ("God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him," ver. 38).

It is a grand conception which regards the churchyard as a "God's Acre," where the bodies are laid down as seed for eternity. But generally a simile halts somewhere, *i.e.* not every feature in the figure is applicable to the subject it is designed to illustrate; so is it also here. The seed which is placed in the ground does not really decay; for if that were so it would never spring up, but would perish for ever. If it is ever to grow, it must only be the outer shell of the seed that decays. But within this lies a minute germ which does not decay. This germ is a tiny image of the mother plant. It is that which sprouts in the earth and becomes the new plant of the same species. With this germ as a link is preserved the connection with the mother plant, and thereby also its identity when it rises rejuvenated in the new. The question is therefore, whether in the body, which is deposited in the earth, there is any such germ which does not decay, and which only awaits the spring of eternity that it may sprout forth. Only then would the similarity to the plant's regeneration in the new plant be perfect, and in that

way it would also be explicable how the resurrection body can be a new body and yet likewise the old in a renewed form.

The Jews have observed this, and have built thereon a theory of the resurrection of the body, which is very ingenious, but which, unfortunately, finds no support in Scripture or experience. They suppose that there is a small bone in the body¹ which does not decay, and which therefore becomes the nucleus of the resurrection body, and this theory the Mohammedans have also borrowed from the Jews.²

These products of Jewish and Mohammedan fantasy have no other significance for us than to show that attention was directed at an early period to this question: How is the connection preserved between the body which is laid in the grave and that which rises at the resurrection?

Now how are we to answer this question?

Our old Church teachers thought of the connection between the old and the new body thus, that the resurrection body will contain exactly the same particles of matter as the body which is laid in the grave. But is it the material part which is the essential thing in the body? Is it not much

¹ The Jews put the matter in this way. Somewhere in the spinal column, they say, there lies a tiny bone which they call Luz (almond tree). This comes down from heaven and is the seat of the real essence of the human body. It does not share in any of the carnal desires which usually rule in the body; and so it is by God deemed worthy of indestructibility. It is not consumed by fire, it is not soluble in water, and it cannot be crushed with any hammer. They even tell how a famous rabbi proved this to the Emperor Hadrian. He placed it, forsooth, on an anvil and beat it with a huge hammer. Both hammer and anvil broke, but the bone remained uninjured. It is that bone which in Ecclesiastes xii. 5 is called "the almond tree"; it is that which is referred to when, in Isaiah lviii. 11 R.V., it is said that "the Lord . . . shall make strong thy bones," and it is that which is meant when Ezekiel xxxii. 27 says of the ungodly that "their iniquities shall be upon their bones." There is nothing else which can dissolve it but the "dew of the resurrection," of which it is written, "Thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. xxvi. 19). When this dew falls on it (at the Messiah's advent) it is softened, and then there springs forth from it a new body, the resurrection body (Weber, *System der alltsynog. paläst. Theol.*, p. 353; Eisenmenger, *Entd. Jud.*, ii. 930-34).

² The Mohammedans hold practically the same view as the Jews, but they call the bone Ajeb, and say that it becomes softened by 40 days' (according to another tradition 40 years') rain, which precedes the resurrection (vide Poc. *Not. in Port. Mosis*, p. 252; Sale's *Introduction to the Koran*, sec. iv.).

rather the form? We have previously shown how the change of substance in the course of a few years altogether renews our body,¹ but it does not thereby cease to be the same body (p. 27). But if this be the case, the identity of the body cannot depend on its substance, and therefore it cannot be necessary to suppose that the resurrection body, in order to be the same body, must consist of the same particles of matter as the old. Nor is the identity bound to the form in its entirety, but only to its characteristic features. This is best seen in the earthly development of the single individual. The little child, the vigorous youth, and the bent and emaciated old man are still the same persons both in soul and body, in spite of the fact that the body increases, decreases, and several times changes the material of which it is composed between the cradle and the grave. Even the features of the face meanwhile undergo very considerable changes, and yet it is the same body.

Besides, there is something else to be noticed that conflicts with the old theory of the substance of the resurrection body. When bodies decay in the grave their particles pass into other bodies, generally first into plants or animals, and then again into the people who eat these. The same particle may therefore in the course of time have been a component part of several human bodies. Sometimes, too, this takes place quite directly; for there are many tribes which are cannibal, and these men-eaters will also rise again. Now if every particle at the resurrection is to be gathered together to its own body, what will happen to the particle which formed part of several human bodies at different times? To what body will it belong at the resurrection?

Some of the Church Fathers had already observed this difficulty, but they would not give up the idea that the resurrection body will contain exactly the same material that is laid in the grave, and they solved the knot by assuming that God, in such cases as we have mentioned, will cause each particle to return to the body to which it first belonged, and will then by a new creation supply its place in the bodies

¹ According to the most recent physiological investigations, this renewal of the body does not take place equally quickly in all the tissues.

which had contained it later.¹ But other Church Fathers took up the freer standpoint, that the identity does not really depend on the mass of matter, but on the essential identity of the body contained in the shape or form which is preserved through every change of substance. Such was the view of Origen and his school.

To this last view most modern theologians have given their adherence, and that with reason. That which arises is the very body that is laid in the grave. But the identity of the one with the other does not depend on both containing the same material particles. If this latter were a necessary moment in the identity, the old man would not have the same body as the young man, and he the same as the child; and yet our self-consciousness tells us that it is the same body. This self-consciousness will also give its testimony at the resurrection, so that every soul will recognise its own in the glorified body it receives, and others will also recognise it as theirs, not because it consists of the same particles of matter, but because the features essential to it are the same.² Practically in our grossly sensual body there seems to be a finer body, as it were, the pattern in which the changes of particles are woven into the substance. It is that which gives it its characteristic stamp. It is here as with a portrait which a master hand has produced; it is the same portrait whether it is drawn on paper, carved in wood, graven in copper, or painted on canvas, yea, even if it is hewn out of marble, or cast in bronze; for it is not these gross material substances that give it its character. (*Cf.* pp. 27, 73, 131, and especially 135).

But we do not mean to deny that the resurrection body consists of material substance. We merely mean that it

¹ So Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, xxii. 20.

² This may be said to be the view of Martensen (*Dogmatik*, sec. 275), Delitzsch (*Psychologie*, sec. 460), Oosterzee (*Dogm.*, sec. 143), A. A. Hodge (*Theology*, pp. 450, 451), and others, although they do not enter minutely into the difficulties. Our old Lutheran dogmatists, on the other hand,—like the majority of those of the ancient Church and of the Middle Ages,—considered that the new body consisted of the very same particles as the old. So do Thomasius and Philippi. But Rothe, Nitzsch, Clausen, and others spiritualize the whole thing away.

assumes matter from the nature which is on the point of being glorified, and inserts it in its own form transferred from the old body, its *formelle schema*, to use the expression for lack of a better. But this substance is so different from the old, grossly material, that the resurrection body is by the apostle designated "a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44). It is no longer a hindrance to the spirit (the soul), but an organ fully corresponding to its nature, a suitable instrument for its activity.¹

¹ Against the view which is here set forth, it may no doubt be objected that it is hardly reconcilable with the clause concerning "the resurrection of the flesh" in the Third Article of the Lutheran Creed; for what is here represented is really the resurrection not of the flesh (the material portion), but only of the body; for the flesh implies the material part of us, the body implies the frame as an organism (*vide* hereon Cremer under the words *σάρξ* and *σῶμα*, and also Hahn's *Theol. des N. T.*, secs. 155-57).

We have not overlooked this fact. But to us it appears very doubtful whether the expression, "the resurrection of the flesh," has the necessary Scripture authority. Certainly, it is hardly Pauline. The apostle always speaks either of the resurrection of the dead or of the body, not of the flesh. Nor does he use the phrase, "the body of this flesh," which he usually employs when he is speaking about this earthly body, or at least the substance of which it is composed (Col. i. 22). In his teaching concerning the resurrection (in 1 Cor. xv.), he uses the word "flesh" (*σάρξ*) only in comparison with the flesh of beasts (xv. 39), but he always uses "body" (*σῶμα*) of the resurrection body (xv. 44; *cf.* Phil. iii. 21); for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50). The only passage which could be quoted in support of the expression, "the resurrection of the flesh," is Luke xxiv. 39, where the Saviour says of His body, that it has "flesh and bones." But that body had not undergone any process of decay, and besides, it was in the intermediate stage between the earthly and heavenly existence, which was peculiar to the "forty days" until the ascension. To several of the old Fathers, as is well known, this supplied some support for their view that even those who arise for the millennial kingdom will be in a state of half-transfiguration until the general resurrection which will first complete the transfiguration of their bodies. Still, it must be admitted that there are passages in the New Testament where "flesh" seems to be used in almost the same sense as "body" (*vide* John vi. 51-56; 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11; Eph. v. 30).

The phrase, "the resurrection of the flesh," doubtless found its way into the Apostles' Creed in order to emphasize the opposition of the Church to Gnostics and Docetists, some of whom altogether denied, whilst others explained away, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* speaks only of "the resurrection of the dead" (c. 16). It is the same in the Nicene Creed, and in the Athanasian it is merely said that "all men shall rise again with their bodies." Since these two Confessions have the same validity among us as the Apostles' Creed, we

Of the glory of the resurrection body the apostle speaks in the important passage, 1 Corinthians xv. 42-44. The substance of it is that the resurrection body is incorruptible (*i.e.* it is not liable to grow old and die), glorious, powerful, spiritual,—all in contrast to our earthly body. The expressions need no explanation, except perhaps the last, spiritual. This designates the resurrection body as perfectly corresponding to the nature and need of the spirit, glorified, permeated by God's Spirit, and as a convenient organ for its life and activity, and a true reflection of its content. Thus this body stands in contrast to the earthly body, which is designated "a natural body," or, according to the original, really "a psychic body," *i.e.* a body which but poorly answers to the needs of the spirit, and practically only to that of the soul, this term being applied to the lower part of our spiritual life, with which are connected the instincts that are active in the earthly body,—a link between the spirit and the body.

The apostle's whole description of the resurrection body holds good, however, only of the bodies of believers. Of the ungodly he does not speak at all. It has mostly been supposed that these will arise in an ugly and hideous form. But we know nothing with certainty of this, and it would be most correct to say with Augustine, that there is little advantage to be gained by troubling oneself about uncertain questions concerning the appearance of the body in the case prefer to adhere to their mode of expression, especially since it has the best warrant in Scripture itself.

In the other old Symbols and Confessions of Faith, "the resurrection of the flesh" is the usual expression, from which, however, there are exceptions (*vide, e.g.,* Hahn's *Bibl. der Symb.*, pp. 53, 59, 85). That the reason for selecting that phrase was regard for the heretics, we learn especially from a letter by Jerome (Ep. 65 *ad Tom.*), where that is expressly said; indeed, this regard even led the Church in Aquileia to add *this* ("the resurrection of this flesh," Hahn, pp. 30-33).

The phrase is not used in any of the Lutheran Confessions that were drawn up in Luther's days, and Luther himself, in his Larger Catechism (Art. 3), says that it ought not in "good German" to be called either "the resurrection of the body or the corpse." Only in the Formula of Concord, drawn up after Luther's death, is it expressly said that it is the substance of this our flesh ("*hujus nostræ carnis substantia*") which shall arise (*Form. Conc. ii., Sol. decl. 1*).

of those whose damnation is certain (*Enchir.*, 92). There are certainly some hints in Scripture leading to the supposition that the ugly soul will also have for its abode an ugly body. It is said even in Daniel that some will arise "to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2), and it is natural to refer especially the last word to the condition of their bodies, as it is exactly the same word (in the original) that is used of the carcasses of the ungodly which "shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. lxvi. 24). And this *per se* is natural. For we must suppose that a spiritual body, as the resurrection body will be, will also in this respect correspond with the spirit, that it will be a clear reflection of it, will plainly reveal its content,—whether good or bad,—will be, so to speak, transparent. Of these, of course, one cannot actually employ the expression "glorified bodies," which Scripture certainly never does use in reference to them.¹ With the glorified bodies of the righteous they can only be supposed to have "incorruption" and "immortality" in common; but these characteristics they must have; for without them they would be just as little able to endure everlasting torment as the elect, without these attributes, would be able to endure the sight of His face who has said, "Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me and live" (Ex. xxxiii. 20).

NOTE

Connected with the doctrine of the resurrection here set forth are several incidental questions which we merely indicate, the most of them being of such a nature that they do not admit of being satisfactorily answered.

For instance, it has been asked: Will they who died as children also arise as children? Will the youth rise as a youth, and the old man as an old man? Will there be any distinction between the sexes in the resurrection? Will the unborn child that dies in the mother's womb arise, or the monsters that have

¹ Among the many strange fancies concerning the resurrection bodies of the ungodly, Lange's is perhaps the most *outré*. According to him, their bodies will be formed of the slag, the scoriæ, left from the conflagration of the world, and on that very account they will be incorruptible, incombustible, because they consist of a substance which has already had everything combustible about it burned out (Kliefoth, p. 271).

sometimes come to the birth? Will the individual nationalities, with their characteristic differences of feature, colour, and so forth, preserve their national types at the resurrection? Will the malformations and deformities which have marred so many of the children of men on earth be repeated in the resurrection bodies? etc., etc. God's Word gives us no definite answer to any of these questions; we have only hints.

As concerns the age, it is an old idea in the Church that all will arise of that age at which man stands at full maturity, consequently about the age of thirty. In support of this, appeal has been made to the apostle's words, that our measure is "the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13; *cf.* Rom. viii. 29; Phil. iii. 21); and it has been insisted that this refers to Christ being about thirty-three years of age. But the passage merely speaks of our spiritual maturity. Yet it is significant that Christ, the first-fruits of the resurrection, attained exactly that age. When we remember how He represents the race, and has become our pattern, whom we shall resemble in the resurrection (Rom. vi. 5), it is not a far-fetched thought that the likeness will also include the feature here indicated. As the head, so the members.

In the same direction points the fact that the first Adam made his appearance as a fully developed man, not as a child or an old man. He was the natural head of the race, and, like Christ, the absolute expression of the idea of a true man.

But of more weight than either of these considerations is the fact that all that precedes the age of manhood belongs to an increasing, and all that follows it to a decreasing, development. There does not appear to be room for any of these stages in the state of perfection, for the former is a series of steps up towards the perfection of the body, the latter a succession of steps away from it. Besides, both of these series stand in the closest connection with birth and death. The former is an ascent from birth to manhood, the latter a descent from manhood to death, *i.e.* when life is allowed to follow its natural course. Consequently there seems to be no room for either of them in a state where there is neither birth nor death.

It might, indeed, be objected that the humanity of earth would not be represented in its fulness in the life that is coming, if all ages had not also their representatives there. But do not those successive ages belong to the imperfect in the earthly life which will be done away when that which is perfect is come? (1 Cor. xiii. 10).

It might, no doubt, be asked, If one dies as a child, then he has at his death not merely a child's body, but also a child's undeveloped soul;—will a child's soul then be united with the body of a full-grown man? Would not that be out of harmony? But how do we know that the child's soul may not have developed between death and doomsday, and attained its full maturity? So with the old man. If he receives back his body in the fulness of youth, we may rest quite satisfied that his soul will also be freed from all the dulness of age, so that it will correspond with the youthful body. In this way, certainly, the earthly life would apparently be without any bodily and psychic result for the resurrection state. But the earthly life is so very short in comparison with the period between death and doomsday that, if there is any progress in this period, the earthly life will have an important bearing, not so much on the sum of the development, so far as soul and body are concerned, as on the direction which it gives that development (faith or unbelief), and by which the direction of the continuation is conditioned.

We have no right whatever positively to assert this—since Scripture is silent on the subject; it is merely a thought worthy of consideration. But if the case be as we have hinted, we have herein some comfort when we think of all the interrupted developments, all the germs apparently choked at birth, which are often a crux for our thoughts. Then will neither the early interrupted course of the little child nor the broken-down and sluggish intellectual and bodily forces of the old man occasion us any regret. As concerns the latter, we certainly cannot imagine the old man appearing with a glorified body in which all the disfiguring furrows and wrinkles of old age are preserved. We cannot reconcile that with the conception of a glorified body. But is not the same thing true of the weakness and helplessness of childhood? We cannot well imagine the old becoming young again without thinking of the young attaining maturity. These two thoughts seem to harmonize best with the saying, “it is raised in power” (1 Cor. xv. 43).*

As concerns the sexes, it is quite a matter of course that when there is no longer birth or death, and thus no need whatever for the propagation of the race, there can be no thought of the natural relation between male and female which depends on these facts. And so too the Saviour says, “When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Mark xii. 25). In that they resemble the angels. But if, on this account, one should conclude that all difference of sex whatever is eliminated, the conclusion may be a hasty one. The difference between man and woman is not merely that which conditions the perpetuation of the race. It is first and foremost a mental difference. The man is the more sober, more sagacious, stronger willed; the woman the finer, more imaginative, more emotional. The difference of bodily frame is a reflection of this. In relation to Christ, “there is neither male nor female” (Gal. iii. 28), since both have the same right to His kingdom and the same value in His eyes. But still they regard salvation itself somewhat differently. In the man it is more the power of faith and action in the great trials of life which shows that Christ has become his life; in the woman it is more a matter of feeling—inwardly, the calm affectionate devotion to the Lord; outwardly, the wonderful power of self-sacrifice, of suffering, of enduring—which stamps her character. In both the likeness of God is renewed, but in a somewhat different form in accordance with the difference in their natures. The difference in bodily form is therefore a true expression of a fundamental difference, both in their natural soul-life and in their new spiritual life. Consequently it is natural to suppose that this will also have its expression in the resurrection bodies, so that they reflect throughout eternity different sides of the nature of Him whose image we shall bear in heaven.

Something similar may possibly be said of the different individuals and different national types. Here also there is reason to suppose that the marks of fundamental difference will be preserved, in order that the wonderful variety,

* The only passage of Scripture which might seem to speak against the thought we have indicated is Revelation xx. 12: “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.” But it is certainly not bodily stature on which the emphasis is here laid. The Revelation appears to use this expression only to denote emphatically that what is said holds good of all without exception (*vide* Rev. xi. 18, xiii. 16, xix. 5, 18).

both of different personalities and national individuals, may reflect its own ray of the beauty and glory of the infinite God, whose whole image no single creature can ever completely contain and reflect. So far as individuals are concerned, this continued difference of theirs is likewise a direct result of the new body bearing the fundamental stamp of the old—which in turn also seems to imply that the national types cannot quite disappear, since these are the higher unity of the individualities.

Most assuredly everything that is really unlovely in individuals or nations will disappear and not re-appear in the glorified body; for then it would not be a glorified body. We maintain, as the foundation of our whole view of the resurrection body, that it belongs to "that which is perfect," which is to come, when "that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. xiii. 10).

And from this it follows that everything abnormal and monstrous must disappear. We cannot imagine that there will be found persons with a finger too many or too few, with a leg too long or too short, or those who are hump-backed or one-eyed. Everything dwarfed and malformed must be thought of as abolished for ever. There will certainly be no "Siamese twins" in the resurrection kingdom. The Jews and some Church Fathers supposed that all cripples would arise with their bodily defects, but would at once be cured of these by the Lord. This, however, finds no support either in the Word of God or in the analogy of faith.

As concerns unborn children, we shall merely quote Augustine. He thinks that their resurrection must be supposed to be confined to such as have already received a human form,* but he adds: "Who can venture to deny—although he will hardly venture to maintain—that the resurrection can supply that which is still lacking in form, so that the fetus will not lack anything of the completeness to which in time it might have attained."†

He expresses himself somewhat more definitely in the same direction in another place.‡ Our greatest dogmatist, Johan Gerhard, who also refers to these passages, says it all depends on whether the fetus has assumed the human form and life (soul); for after it has life it must be able to share in the resurrection; for "resurrection presupposes that there has been life." But he thinks that it is here necessary to be cautious as to our conclusions, and rather to confess our ignorance than make a chance guess (*temeraria scientia*).§ And in this he is undoubtedly right.

In the very closest connection with the resurrection of the dead stands the transformation of the living, which will do for these what death and resurrection in combination have done for those.

We have previously pointed out that as there is a double resurrection so is there also a double transformation of the living. To the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 5) corresponds

* Cf. the excellent remarks on this subject in Augustine, *Enchir.*, c. 87.

† *Enchir.*, c. 85, in Bruder's edition and the Norwegian one; c. 26 in Kraibinger's.

‡ *De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 13.

§ Gerhard, *Loci*, t. viii. c. 104.

the transformation referred to in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18, which only holds good of believers (iv. 17); to the last or general resurrection corresponds that which is mentioned in 1 Corinthians xv. 51, 52. So at least the matter appears to us; but we hasten to add that we do not wish to imply that this reference of these two passages to two different acts is more than a thought worthy of consideration. But the fact itself, *i.e.* that such a transformation of the living will take place, is, according to the latter passage, absolutely sure; and it is a necessary consequence that if there be a first and a last resurrection from the dead, each of these must be accompanied by such a transformation for those then living.

Since the transformation of those living at the advent of the Lord takes the place of death and resurrection, which others must undergo, we do not need to dwell further on it, for the result to which it will lead has already been discussed under death and resurrection. Of the manner in which it will take place we know nothing.

At the first resurrection only believers are transformed, since it is only believers who arise from the dead then. At the Lord's final advent, on the contrary, the transformation will hold good of all who are then living. Some, however, have supposed that even then only believers will be transformed, whilst the unbelieving will suddenly die and immediately thereafter rise again.¹

But this is scarcely warranted,—at any rate it is doubtful. Certainly the Revelation says that they who belong to the host of Satan, in his last assault upon the kingdom of God on earth, will be consumed by fire from heaven at the coming of the Lord (Rev. xx. 9); but it is not said that all unbelievers will be in that army, and that therefore all will be destroyed by that fire.

Finally, we observe that it is probably this transformation of the living that the apostle has in view in the obscure passage where he speaks of a being "clothed upon" whereby

¹ Such is the theory of Kliefoth (*Eschat.*, p. 274), who, however, only arrives at this result by explaining away the first resurrection, and transferring what is said in Scripture of that resurrection to the last and general resurrection.

"mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 1-4). But that the apostle here also dwells upon the resurrection of believers, and leaves unbelievers altogether out of consideration, is merely due to the fact that he regards it as his special task to bring the consolation of the last resurrection to those in tribulation, as we have already pointed out.

3. THE JUDGMENT

It has been said that "the history of the world is the judgment of the world." And it is undoubtedly true that history is full of the judgments of the Lord, both natural and supernatural. For now the Lord directly interferes by some miracle of judgment, as when He overwhelmed Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, and again—indeed, far oftener—He lets the results of historical development work out judgment upon this development itself. This latter is especially seen in the great turning-points of history, when one period closes and a new begins. Here are withdrawn, as it were, the total assets of the previous period, and there is deposited new capital for development in the succeeding period. The destruction of Jerusalem, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, the period of the Reformation, the French Revolution, with their far-reaching consequences, may serve as examples.

But this does not do away with the necessity—indeed, it really demands—that at the end of history there should be a general judgment of the world, which will educe the aggregate result of the whole development, and in which all earlier and previous judgments will find their completion and their close.

And such a judgment, according to God's Word, will come, a judgment at which all, living and dead, will be present. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 10). "Before Him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt. xxv. 32). "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God" (Rev. xx. 12; *cf.* Rom. xiv. 10).

It is the whole world that is to be judged (Acts xvii. 31). "The quick and the dead" are both to be subjects of the

Judgment (2 Tim. iv. 1). And not only will all men then be judged, but the wicked angels likewise; for these also are reserved to the great Day of Judgment (2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6), a judgment the issue of which, far in advance, fills them with horror (Matt. viii. 29). As concerns the devil himself, it seems as if he received his doom before the actual general Judgment begins (Rev. xx. 10), consequently the judgment upon him is not again mentioned in connection with the act of judgment itself. But since we cannot think of judgment upon the devil apart from judgment upon his angels, and it is expressly said of them that believers will have their share in judging them (1 Cor. vi. 3), we must suppose that the judgment upon them takes place at the beginning of that great Day. Indeed, this follows from the assurance that the wicked spirits—as has already been mentioned—are reserved to the judgment of the great Day.¹

Against this universality—according to the passage quoted, undoubted universality—of the Last Judgment, so far as mankind is concerned, the following objections have been made:—

(a) For the citizens of the millennial kingdom in heaven the Judgment can have no significance. The same holds good of all the other sainted dead; for by participation in bliss

¹ It is the case that “the devil and his angels” are already condemned, *i.e.* expelled from the presence of God. This condemnation, however, is only the punishment for their own fall. But they have also an account to pay for their seducing influence throughout the history of the whole human race. This is the account which must now be paid,—a great and terrible account. The doom passed upon the devil at the very beginning of the millennial kingdom (Rev. xx. 1-3) merely consisted in the temporary interruption of his work of temptation and seduction. But that was not designed to be a new punishment. He was only confined to the pit which was previously his real abode (Luke viii. 31), wherefore he was also called the angel of the “bottomless pit” (Rev. ix. 11). But now for the first time he is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 10), the “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. xxv. 41),—expressions which at least seem to imply that his pangs are now intensified, and receive their final seal as everlasting. If the place is still the same, then it must now have received another character, have become a real “hell.” Even for the wicked spirits, it must have some significance that they are reserved for the great Day of Judgment.

We therefore conclude that “the great Day” (Jude 6) is “the Judgment Day,” although some (*e.g.*, Kliefoth) have doubted this without sufficient reason, simply because the article is awaiting.

they have already been set free from all the guilt of sin. The same holds true of the ungodly, since they by their death become the subjects of a judgment when they are not permitted to be with the Lord.

We hope, however, to show that even for these the Judgment has some significance.

(b) It is expressly said that he who believes on the Son "shall not come into condemnation" (John v. 24).

Quite true; but this expression only implies that by justification through faith the one who believes is already set free from guilt, and therein he has the sure pledge of his final acquittal. On the other hand, it is said of the one who does not believe, that he "is condemned already" (John iii. 18). If the former expression indicates that the believer will not appear before the judgment-seat, the latter must indicate that the unbelieving will also have no need to appear before the bar of God on the Last Day. Who, then, would appear for judgment at all? What, then, would be the meaning of passages like 2 Corinthians v. 10?

When and where will the Judgment be held?

According to Scripture, it is clear that the Judgment will not take place until after the advent and the resurrection, since it is those who have arisen and those simultaneously transformed who are to be judged by the Saviour at His coming. Moreover, the nature of the case implies that the Judgment must precede the everlasting states (eternal death and eternal life), since the destiny of men throughout eternity will be determined by that Judgment. The only point that is uncertain, so far as the time is concerned, is whether the Judgment will precede or succeed the transformation of nature, a question which can scarcely be answered with confidence; for, on the one hand, there are passages which seem to imply that the transformation of creation will take place at the moment when the Judgment is about to begin (Rev. xx. 11); and, on the other hand, this conversion of the old earth and heaven into the new earth and heaven stands in such a close relation to the bliss of those who are to inhabit the latter, that it is very natural to connect this transformation with the close of the Judgment. Indeed, our old doctrinal writers

usually did so, but for the most part they put annihilation for transformation, of which more anon.

Of the duration of the Judgment we can say nothing definitely. Certainly it is called "a day," but how long "a day of the Lord" is we do not know; we only know that to Him a thousand years are as a single day (Ps. xc. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 8). And least of all can the expression be forced so as to mean literally twenty-four hours, when the reference is to a period when the whole of nature, with its measure of time, is on the point of being transformed and of passing into timeless conditions. The expression doubtless only designates the Judgment as an act that is uninterrupted, connected, an act complete in itself.¹

Nor does Scripture give us any fuller information concerning the place where the Judgment will take place. Most of the ancients supposed it would take place in the air whilst the earth was burning up. But it is much more reasonable to assume, with Johan Gerhard and others, that it will take place upon the earth. It is the earthly life of men that is chiefly to be inquired into at this Judgment. The earth has been witness both of the Fall and the Atonement, of the state of innocence, of sin and of grace, and it is natural that this scene of the history should also be the place of the Judgment. It will probably be the last act upon the old earth.²

The Judge is Christ Himself.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John v. 22). "The Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (John v. 27). "He (God) hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31). "He (Christ) . . . was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts x. 42). It is Christ—He and no other—who, everywhere in the New Testament, is designated as the

¹ The Mohammedans fix the duration of the Judgment Day sometimes at 1000 years (Koran, Sur. xxxii. 4), sometimes at 50,000 years (Koran, Sur. lxx. 4).

² The Rabbins—and the Mohammedans after them—refer the Judgment to "the valley of Jehoshaphat" (possibly merely because Jehoshaphat means "Jehovah judges," although the Jews also appeal to Joel iii. 17).

Judge of the world (Matt. xvi. 27, xxv. 31; Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10).

Even Daniel saw one coming in the clouds of heaven like the Son of Man, immediately before the Judgment was held, and there was given him dominion (Dan. vii. 13 *et seq.*). It is before the judgment-seat of the Son of Man that all are to appear (Rom. xiv. 10). It is significant that it is said that the Father has made Him the Judge, because He is "Man's Son." As such He is "man's eternal prototype," and therefore also the standard of what man might and should be. As such He is man's Redeemer, the way of salvation for them that believe (John xiv. 6), "a stumbling-stone and rock of offence" for the unbelieving (Rom. ix. 32, 33). As such, finally, He has passed through human experiences (Heb. iv. 15), and therefore He is in His own person the strongest refutation of every objection sinners may be ready to make on the ground of the difficult and seducing conditions of the earthly life.

Certainly it is also said that the believing will be with Him and judge the world (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3), and that the apostles will sit upon the twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28). But possibly this only means that they will be assessors at the Judgment, and, having been acquitted themselves, say their Amen to the sentences of the Lord; for the real Judge is Christ Himself.

This Judge now takes His seat on "the throne of His glory" (Matt. xix. 28), a "great white throne" (Rev. xx. 11), and all the nations of the earth assemble before it. The holy angels also are present, yet neither as co-judges nor as the subjects of judgment (for they have been long since perfected), but only as the guard of honour of the Judge (Luke ix. 26), and as witnesses of the Judgment (Luke xii. 8). It also falls to their lot to gather the people—at least the pious—to the throne ("the reapers are the angels," Matt. xiii. 39; "they shall gather together His elect from the four winds," Matt. xxiv. 31), and to carry out the command to "sever the wicked from among the just" (Matt. xiii. 49, 50). They are consequently here also "ministering spirits" (Heb. i. 14), as they have been throughout the history of salvation.

The act of judgment itself is described in Revelation xx. 12-15 and Matthew xxv. 31-46, and has further light thrown on it by many other passages.

On what lines, according to what standard,—what norm,—will the Lord judge men?

First and foremost, according to their relation to Himself. It is that relation which decides their salvation or damnation. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"; but of the one "that believeth not the Son" it is said that "the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). Of course the reference here is to faith that is living and zealous in confession and in service. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9). "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. ii. 26). And finally, it must be a faith that continues unto the end: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. xxiv. 13; Rev. ii. 10).

But "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). Consequently the relation to Christ in faith or unbelief will depend on the attitude that the individual may take up towards His Word. And so the Saviour says to them who reject His Word, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48), and His apostle testifies that God will judge the secrets of men according to the gospel he proclaimed by Jesus Christ (Rom. ii. 16). But from this it seems to follow that all must have had the opportunity of hearing that gospel before the Judgment is held, a subject we have previously discussed (*vide* pp. 168-208).

We have already pointed out that faith cannot live without works. And, consequently, works also come into consideration, partly as an evidence that faith has existed, partly as a standard of the healthiness and maturity of the life of faith. If there are no truly good works, there can have been no true faith, and if good works have been few and feeble, then the life of faith has also been feeble. Thus it is

expressly said that the Lord will judge or "reward every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). "The Father, . . . without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work" (1 Pet. i. 17). He "will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Rom. ii. 6-8). It is said of the ungodly that their "end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. xi. 15). "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). All are to be "judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. xx. 12).

And there are enumerated in the Word of God special works to which consideration will be given in the Judgment. Hospitality to the Lord's disciples (Mark ix. 41; Matt. x. 41), acts of charity (Matt. xxv. 35; Luke xiv. 13, 14), kindness to enemies (Luke vi. 35), the words men have spoken (Matt. xii. 36), all deeds, however private (Matt. vi. 4, 6, 18, x. 26), yea, even the secret thoughts of the heart (Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5), for everything is written "in the books" (Rev. xx. 12), *i.e.* is remembered by God; everything is transparent to God without further investigation, and we may infer that on that day it will also be so clear to the sinner's own consciousness, to his accusing conscience, that he will see it as if it were depicted before his eyes,—although he may deceive himself with respect to the real value of the work (Matt. vii. 22).

It is matter for remark that whilst all will be "judged out of those things which were written in the books" (Rev. xx. 12), yet exclusion from salvation will depend only on this one thing, that the individuals are "not found written in the book of life" (Rev. xx. 15), *i.e.* are not found in the living fellowship of faith with the Lord. Only of Christ's true disciples is it the case that their "names are in the book of life" (Phil. iv. 3), "the Lamb's book of life"

(Rev. xxi. 27), "written in heaven" (Luke x. 20), in the fullest sense "written among the living" (unto life) "in Jerusalem" (Isa. iv. 3), an entry that will never be blotted out (Rev. iii. 5).

That which the Lord bestows in the Judgment is expressly designated as reward. The day will show how every man's work has been, and if the work of any man can stand the test he will "receive a reward" (1 Cor. iii. 14; *cf.* Matt. x. 41). The Lord Himself says: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me" (Rev. xxii. 12). By the ungodly this reward is thoroughly deserved; to the believing it is "a reward of grace," since their good works which the Lord rewards are effected by His Holy Spirit and executed with powers He has granted. The apostle also asserts that the salvation of believers is a gift of God, and not a fruit of works of which they might boast, adding, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). Besides, even our best works are only a part (and that merely a small and insignificant part) of the complete duty we already owe to God (Luke xvii. 10).

But this gracious reward cannot be salvation itself,—for that is based on living fellowship with Christ alone,—but only degrees in glory; consequently the apostle says that a man may be saved—although only as through fire, *i.e.* with the utmost difficulty—even if much of his work is consumed on the day of testing, and he thereby comes "to suffer loss" by losing his "reward" (1 Cor. iii. 13–15). Naturally it is not so much on the extent of the works as on their character, their purity, that the reward depends.

For the ungodly the same rule must be considered as in operation. It is unbelief that condemns them; but the degree of their wickedness manifests itself in the greater or lesser ungodliness of their lives, and to that the reward must also correspond, the torment being greater or less; otherwise God would not be a righteous God, and it could not with full truth be said of them that their "end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. xi. 15). And Scripture expressly says that it will be more tolerable in the Judgment Day for some

non-believers than for others (Matt. xi. 22), a difference which must be supposed to depend partly on the light each one has had, and partly on how he has employed it (Luke xii. 47, 48).

There must, of course, be gradations both in glory and in perdition.

It has been asked: Will the forgiven sins of the believer be brought up at the Judgment, but as forgiven—to the praise of God's pardoning grace? We cannot imagine such a possibility; for the assurance of Scripture, that everything will be blotted out and forgotten, is too emphatic (*vide, e.g.*, passages like Isa. xliii. 25; Jer. xxxi. 34; Ezek. xviii. 22; Mic. vii. 19). But that is only on condition that he has not fallen out of grace again; for in such a case all his already pardoned sins will return upon his head, and all his former good deeds lose their significance and their value (Ezek. xviii. 24).

In what has just been enunciated we have a contribution towards the answering of the question: What significance can the Judgment have in relation to the fact that those already dead enter either into bliss or woe at the moment of their death?

It is true that in a manner they have already entered into one of these two states. But yet it must be observed:—

1. Before the Judgment there is only mention of bliss or lack of bliss, but not of any real measuring out of reward according to each man's work. That will first take place at the Judgment. Then it holds good not merely of faith or unbelief, but also of all the fruits of faith or unbelief.

2. There is a certain character of indefiniteness and relative indecision connected with the states which precede the Judgment, so far, at least, as the unblessed are concerned. How otherwise is it possible for many, until the very day of their death, to deceive themselves with a false hope of belonging to the Lord, as from such passages as Matthew vii. 22, 23 is seen to be the case?

3. The very place of abode will henceforth be different from what it was previously, both for the blest and for the unblest. Formerly those went to heaven, these to Hades; now the blest go to the New Jerusalem and the damned to hell.

4. Of much less importance is it that the judgment of God, which preliminarily was passed upon each, now receives its public authentication. It was in this that our old dogmatists almost exclusively saw the significance of the Last Judgment.

5. Finally, it is a question whether the time between death and doomsday is not also to be considered here. If during this period there has been a development,—the probability of which we have already attempted to show (pp. 162 *et seq.*),—assuredly this development will likewise be the subject of reckoning and judgment. No change of tendency is possible in this interval, either for the believing or the unbelieving, but the development, the advance along the course begun during the earthly life, must certainly have its bearing upon the Judgment. It cannot surely be the case that it is only the development during the earthly life that has any significance for God. It is true that there is one passage in which the works which are to be judged are designated as the “things done in the body” (2 Cor. v. 10); but that may be merely an expression indicating what is the most essential thing, the thing beyond everything else which it is necessary to emphasize to all to whom this life has been a day of grace in which salvation has been proffered to them. It is not uncommon for the designation of a thing to be derived from the most essential feature of it (“*Denominatio fit a parte potiori*”).

However, the Judgment must have the greatest significance of all for those who have not received any call during their earthly lives. For if it is the case that they receive any saving call beyond this life, it is quite clear that their destiny must be due to the attitude they take up towards that gracious call. Now, this attitude must essentially depend on the relation in which they stood to the feeble light they had, during their earthly life, in conscience (Rom. ii. 14, 15) and nature (Rom. i. 19, 20), a relation which to a greater or less degree will have prepared them for, or hardened them against, the coming call of grace, and thus have had its bearing upon their final attitude towards the call. The earthly life, even in the case of such, will

therefore not be without significance for the Judgment and eternity.

Such persons cannot really, during their earthly life, be designated either as believers or unbelievers, but only as non-believers; for the two former terms presuppose that they have been the subjects of a gracious call, and either have accepted or have rejected it.

If those uncalled in this life—among whom we reckon the heathen—have accepted the call beyond the grave, they will at the Judgment be saved; if not, they will be damned. Nor does there seem to be less room here for works as the fruits of faith, which should condition special rewards of grace for individuals. But we know nothing of any such activity in the kingdom of death, although, on the other hand, we dare not deny that it exists.

But we again repeat that a call after death for such uncalled ones (and only for them) merely stands as a probable possibility, not as a certainty, a view which we have already tried to establish (particularly on pp. 168–208, to which the reader is referred).¹

The sentence which is the result of the Judgment appears in this, that the Judge separates the justified from the guilty. It is this separation which the Baptist announces when he says of the Lord Jesus Christ that "He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 12); and it is to this there is reference in the account of the Judgment: "Before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. xxv. 32, 33).

Still, the actual sentence lies in the words He addresses to each of these two classes.

To the one He says: "Come, ye blessed of My Father,

¹ As we have already pointed out, Kliefoth thinks that those uncalled will receive a call of grace from the Lord at the moment when He appears in the clouds (comes to judgment), and that they may then be able to decide for or against Him (*Eschatologie*, pp. 112–13).

inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34). To the other He says: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). Few are the words, —yet how majestic, how decisive! How life-inspiring for the one, how overwhelming for the other! We abstain from any explanation. They are words which can be understood by every one and which should be allowed to stand alone. We merely desire the reader to observe that bliss was prepared for mankind from all eternity, but perdition was only prepared for the devil and his angels. It was not the original intention that perdition should be the destiny of mankind, and it is man's own fault when it becomes so.

Then follows the execution of the Judgment. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15). "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 46).

For the pious nothing else but forgiveness is required; they go gladly and willingly to the glorious inheritance bestowed upon them. On the other hand, it seems as if the angels execute judgment upon the damned, and convey them to their place of torment; for it is said of the angels that "they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xiii. 41, 42). "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xiii. 49, 50).

4. PERDITION

There are three questions here requiring to be answered: To what place are the damned consigned? What will their state there be? How long will it last? We can only devote a few lines to each of them.

(a) *The place.* It is usual to designate this place "Hell."

In the original Scriptures there are several terms which in our Bible are rendered by this one word, although each of the terms so employed has its own special significance. The first is "the kingdom of death" (Sheol or Hades), which implies the abode of the dead, chiefly as it appeared to the Old Testament view (*vide* pp. 93–108), although Hades, it is true, in the parable of the rich man, is placed in New Testament light (*cf.* p. 112). These words are never used of the abode of the damned after the Judgment; on the contrary, it is said that even Hades will perish at the Judgment (Rev. xx. 14). The second, only found in the New Testament, is the real hell, which is certainly mentioned before the Judgment, but yet with special regard to the Judgment and the time that follows it. It is Gehenna (Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 5), or Gehenna fire (Matt. v. 22, xviii. 9; *cf.* Matt. xxiii. 15–33), and is designated as a place of unquenchable fire (Mark ix. 43).¹ There is no doubt whatever that that is what is called the furnace of fire (Matt. xiii. 42–50), the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20, xx. 15), outer darkness (Matt. viii. 12), everlasting fire (Matt. xviii. 8), the fire which is "prepared for the devil and his angels," and to which the damned are expressly consigned (Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xx. 15).

It must therefore be regarded as beyond doubt that this Gehenna is the common habitation of the devil and the damned after the Last Judgment. But we do not hear anything of it as a place of punishment for men before the Judgment. Nor is the devil said to really dwell there; his abode is designated either as the pit (*vide* p. 419, note) or as Tartarus (2 Pet. ii. 4, in the original), a word which is borrowed from the Greek mythology, and is used in practically the same sense as "the pit."² Many have therefore supposed that

¹ The word Gehenna is derived from the Hebrew Ge-hinnom, the valley of Hinnom, a small cross-valley to the south of Mount Zion, between the valley of Gihon on the west and the valley of Jehoshaphat on the east. Here the ungodly kings Ahaz and Manasseh caused human sacrifices to be offered to the god Moloch (Jer. vii. 31, xix. 5, xxxii. 35; *cf.* 2 Chron. xxviii. 3). The pious king Josiah defiled the place (2 Kings xxiii. 10); and from that time it was used as an image of the abominable and horrible, and became therefore the name of the place of torment of the damned. Gehenna is merely the Greek form of that word.

² Tartarus means the under-world. It was to that place that the father of

Gehenna does not exist until the Judgment, but will then first be created. That would admirably correspond with the fact that the habitation of the blest, "the new heaven and the new earth," then also appear as a result of the transformation of nature. It is, however, most probable that Gehenna is the same as the pit. It certainly is the same as the lake of fire in Revelation xx. 15, for this must manifestly have existed even before the Judgment, since Antichrist and the false prophet were cast into it at the very commencement of the millennial kingdom (Rev. xix. 20). It is therefore most natural to suppose that it is the devil's former habitation, the pit, which now becomes Gehenna, the place of torment for him and all the lost.

Where that place is, we have no information whatever, and all guesses and fancies on the subject (*e.g.*, that it will be one of the comets, those "wandering stars," Jude 13) are absolutely valueless. Scripture only tells us that it will be outside the abodes of the blest (Rev. xxii. 15).

(*b*) *The state.* About the state of the lost, Scripture speaks rather more fully. And yet its communications are comparatively few, and clothed in images that are not always very easily understood. This very economy of words should warn us to dwell less on this subject than on the securing of salvation, which is the ultimate goal of the dealings of God, even although that goal may not be gained by all.

In Scripture the most significant designation for perdition is death. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). "The end of those things is death" (Rom. vi. 21). Sinful passions "bring forth fruit unto death" (Rom. vii. 5). "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. viii. 6). "The sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. vii. 10). "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die" (Rom. viii. 13). "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. i. 15). For those who are lost the gospel becomes only "the savour of death unto death"

the gods, according to the Greek myth, hurled down the powers that rebelled against him. Consequently it is quite appropriate as a name for the place where the fallen angels, who had rebelled against God, were placed in prison.

(2 Cor. ii. 15, 16). Perdition is also called "the second death" (Rev. ii. 11, xx. 14, 15, xxi. 8). Shut out from God, who is "the fountain of life," the impenitent find themselves in a state of enduring death.

But this state of death is not to be regarded as a state of insensibility; for it is expressly said that the wicked will suffer punishment, and this punishment is called vengeance, *i.e.* requital (2 Thess. i. 8, 9). The result of the verdict is said to be that they "go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46). What this punishment is, how great the misery, we learn from the declaration that they will dwell in "outer darkness"; and how acute their torment is, and how impotent their rage, is indicated by such a passage as Matthew xiii. 42, or Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. Their state is also designated as "everlasting destruction" (*ὄλεθρος*, 2 Thess. i. 9), or "destruction" (*ἀπώλεια*, Matt. vii. 13; Rom. ix. 22; Phil. iii. 19). The very thought of such a fate is termed a "fearful looking for" (Heb. x. 27, 31).

Their torment is, of course, first and foremost a spiritual, a soul-torment. The idea of being excluded from the fellowship of God and the blest (Matt. xxv. 41, "depart"), of being "cursed" (Matt. xxv. 41), overtaken by "the wrath to come" (Matt. iii. 7), of being for ever the subjects of the wrath of God (John iii. 36; Rom. ii. 8), along with the consciousness that this nameless misery is self-inflicted, must lie like a heavy burden on the soul. To this must be added the consciousness of having completely lost the battle, of having been worsted in conflict with God and His kingdom, which they have always hated ("the carnal mind is enmity against God" Rom. viii. 7), but which they must be supposed to hate more than ever now—with an impotent, self-consuming hatred. Finally, we must think of them as still, indeed, in a higher degree than formerly, animated by sinful passions, which have now no longer anything to turn to (no world of the senses to enjoy), and therefore must consume the soul itself, like those who, mad with thirst or hunger, drink their own blood or gnaw their own flesh (*cf.* the burning thirst of Dives in torment).

To all this must be added the conviction that their state is unchangeable,—of which more later,—and we have a

picture of this torment of soul, if we can form any idea of such inconceivable torment.

But we do not mean to imply that the damned suffer no bodily pain. At the resurrection they have received a body which will certainly share the punishment as it has shared in the life of sin. To the glorified bodies of the blest there corresponds a transformed nature whose glory they will be allowed to share, and in like manner there will be in hell a nature corresponding to the bodies of the damned, a nature which will entail upon them bodily suffering. Indeed, this is implied by such expressions as the "furnace of fire," "the lake of fire," "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. xxi. 8), "their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 48). Possibly these might be interpreted as figurative expressions for the torments of the accusing conscience; but it is more natural to see implied in them that even the body will have its fearful sufferings, although we must be cautious about taking these expressions literally. There is perhaps hardly more in them than that the environment of the unblest will be loathsome and tormenting like their own heart, and a true contrast to the glorious nature on the new earth. And the torment of the body is expressly included when it is said of God, that He can "destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. x. 28).

Are there degrees in this spiritual and bodily torment? Undoubtedly. The very analogy with bliss demands this. For if faith alone saves, but the different fruits of faith receive their different rewards (of grace), it must also be the case that unbelief alone condemns, but the different deeds of unbelievers, and their different relation to the knowledge of the truth, will lead to a difference in the punishment. This is clearly seen from the fact that the judge will reward every man according to his deeds, as we have previously pointed out. Scripture implies this when it refers to those for whom it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment than for others (Matt. xi. 22), or to those who will be beaten with many stripes, whilst others will receive few (Luke xii. 47, 48); and when it is said of the Pharisees that they will receive the greater punishment (Matt. xxiii. 14).

This difference in punishment, however, we must chiefly think of as resulting from and having its root and reason in the very nature of the lost, who in the most literal sense will punish themselves. The more deliberate their denial of the truth has been,—which again depends on the acquaintance with the truth they have had during life,—the more mature must their hatred to the truth have become, and the greater also must their torment be, when this hatred can only manifest itself as impotent rage, every opening for giving it vent in evil acts having been closed. And the stronger the fire of evil passions has become, the greater must be the torment when these passions are reduced to feeding upon themselves, because there is no longer anything they can lay hold of.

Hence we seem bound to assume that there is some difference not merely in the degree of the suffering, but also in its nature, according as the one side or the other of ungodly passion has been prominently developed during the life of sin upon the earth. The avaricious, for instance, who now lack their gold and the opportunity to amass new treasures, will feel the smart in another way than the sensual who have no longer any to seduce.

Can the punishment be supposed to increase? We do not venture to enter into this question. It depends on whether there is development, progress, after the Judgment. If the lost can increase in hatred to God and in the virulence of sinful passions, there must also be an increase of the pain to which these give birth. They are already what we should call absolutely hardened; but yet it is a question whether a creature—as finite—can ever attain such a development in one direction or another that a further progress in the same direction is impossible.

As we leave this subject, there are two grave errors we must reject.

The one is, that the devil is a tormentor who incessantly tortures the lost. Of this there is no trace whatever in Scripture. The devil himself is “tormented day and night” in the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 10), and the lost share the habitation with him; but it is just as little said that he torments them as that they torment him. Besides, it would

conflict with the nature of perdition to suppose anything of the kind. Hell would no longer be a hell to the devil if he could still gratify his desire to do evil. It belongs to the nature of perdition that the devil must now keep his wickedness to himself and be deprived of any vent for it in action.

The second is, that God Himself is the tormentor in hell. This also lacks Scriptural support. God condemns to hell, casts into hell (Matt. x. 28, xxv. 41). But His infinite wisdom reveals itself even here, when He leaves the wicked to punish themselves, hands them over to their own destruction. He withdraws from the lost the influence of His grace and leaves them to themselves, and they have in themselves material enough for a hell, at anyrate, so far as the pangs of the soul are concerned. It is perhaps only a question whether even the physical nature, in the regions of the lost, is not stamped with the unnaturalness which had forced itself by sin upon creation, and which had by the transformation again been removed. So far there may be a root of truth in the view that "hell will be formed from the scoræ of the universal conflagration" (Sartorius).

(c) *The duration.* How long will this state last? To this the Church in every age has said, to all eternity. And that is certainly the only answer, founded on Scripture, that can be given. It is expressly said: "These go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46); "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. i. 9). They are dismissed to the same habitation and state as the devil (Matt. xxv. 41), and we are told that he will be "tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. xx. 10). It is said of the followers of Antichrist, that "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Rev. xiv. 11). The Judge will "burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 12). They will "go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark ix. 43). In their place of torment "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 48). The wrath of God "abideth" on them (John iii. 36).

To the same result we come when we regard the matter from the point of view of psychology and the history of

redemption. If the punishment is ever to cease, it must certainly be by the sinner repenting, but that he can never do of himself. It can only be by the grace of God. But if souls in perdition have been expelled from the grace of God and excluded from His influence, as they undoubtedly are (Matt. xxv. 41, "Depart from Me, ye cursed"), how can any change in their spiritual state take place,—a change which must be a necessary condition if their misery is ever to cease? Just as little can they be supposed to escape from the torment because the punishment has reached a measure equivalent to the sin; for in a state of hatred to God they live in continued sin, and so the guilt can never be diminished by the suffering. And even if it were possible to imagine that sinners might some day escape from that prison, what could be done with their unconverted hearts? To the abode of the pious they could surely not go in that state, and outside of that abode there is no bliss.

NOTE

The doctrine that hell-punishment is eternal has from the first been held by the Church, because it is well supported in Scripture; yet in almost every age several voices have been raised in protest against it—from Origen in the third century down to Farrar in our own days. But it is impossible for us here to enter upon an exhaustive discussion of the subject. We can at most only briefly indicate the various views. Of those who deny that hell-punishment is eternal there are two classes—

1. Some suppose that the torment ceases because the lost themselves cease to exist. That is the so-called Annihilation theory, which has many zealous supporters in England. It is really derived from the Jews (Weber, *System der allsynog. paläst. Theol.*, pp. 374 *et seq.*), but traces of it appear in some of the Fathers [*e.g.*, Justin Martyr, Irenæus (?), and Arnobius]. According to this theory, the lost gradually perish, are annihilated by and during their pangs. Some have attempted to derive the theory from such passages as Matthew iii. 12 ("he will burn up the chaff"), Hebrew x. 27 ("fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries"), and from expressions like "the second death," "destruction" (*δλεθρον, ἀπώλεια*), which merely imply that the state of perdition is an everlasting death, an existence which has no true content, and therefore does not deserve the name of life.

2. Others—and these are the greater number—suppose that the lost will one day be set free from torment, either because they have sufficiently suffered for their guilt (atoned for it), or because they come to repentance, or both together. Some suppose that this will be the case only with a portion of the lost, whilst others hold that it will be so with all, or even at last with the devil himself,

In support of this they maintain that—

(a) Eternal perdition is a thought altogether too horrible. It is certainly a dreadful thought, but the question here is merely whether it is true according to Scripture.

(b) Everlasting punishment conflicts with the love of God, who desires the weal of all. But that "proof" proves too much, and therefore nothing. If it conflicts with the love of God to bring suffering upon us as retribution, then He cannot let the damned be punished for a *limited* period. Consequently they must be blessed at once; but this even these theorists do not venture to assert, since Scripture too clearly says the very reverse, as has already been indicated.

(c) There are several passages which are supposed to point in the direction of a cessation of the punishment at some time (*e.g.* Matt. v. 26; Luke xii. 59; 1 Cor. xv. 28). But not one of these on closer examination will be found to contain the thought that such persons have desired to read out of them (*vide* pp. 172–78).

(d) The word in Hebrew (עולם) and the word in Greek (αἰών) which have been rendered by eternity do not indicate *per se* an endless period. That is true. They only imply an unlimited period which may be endless (*e.g.* Rev. i. 18) or not. Which of these two significations they have depends on the context. Thus עולם is used of limited time in Exodus xxi. 6; Leviticus xxv. 46; Deuteronomy xv. 17; 1 Samuel i. 22, where our translation renders it with "for ever." The same holds true of αἰών in Luke i. 70 and Acts iii. 21 ("since the world began"). But here it must be observed—

(1) The corresponding adjective in the New Testament (αἰώνιος, everlasting) is far more definite than the substantive. It is used even in classical Greek generally in the sense of infinite, endless.

(2) If a certain indefiniteness clings to the words "eternity" and "everlasting," the cause is not a real but a psychological or linguistic one. Language has no quite clear term for the conception, and that is because thought has not been able to grasp the idea of eternity. On this account hardly any language has originally had a definite and unambiguous term for this conception. And the reason is natural enough. To conceive a thing is to determine its content, its extent and its limits. But how can we so determine the conception of infinity, endlessness, to which the idea of eternity belongs (infinity in time)? Our conception of it is thus more or less involved in mist, and the words become a reflection of this mistiness. Only gradually does the usage of the words partially eliminate this indefiniteness. Thus in Malagasy the word for everlasting is "until then" (*i.e.* until an indefinite *then* in the future); in Zulu the word is "until when, when?" The Hebrew עולם probably originally implied, "up to an unknown limit" (from עָלָה, to hide), *i.e.* it was not known whether there might be a limit or where it was. In Greek, as in Latin, the word used seems originally to have indicated a generation, which was the longest measure of time that presented itself to the immediate, unreflecting contemplation. They are all derived from the Sanskrit root *ayu* (life and generation). From this spring the Latin *ævum* (generation), *æternum* (everlasting), and *æternitas* (eternity), also the old High German *ewā* (eternity), the Gothic *aivs* (time, eternity), and the Scandinavian *æve* (a long period), *evighed* (eternity). All start from the conception of a generation, and only gradually does the fuller notion evolve which we connect with these words. Farrar believes that the writers of the New Testament could have expressed the sense "eternal" more plainly by

using, *e.g.*, *ἀεί* (always) or *αἰδιος* (everlasting), but even these words are derived from the same root.

(3) It is indisputable that *αἰώνιος* (eternal) in the New Testament is used of what is the most infinite thing we can conceive, *viz.* God (Rom. xvi. 26; 1 Tim. i. 17; Heb. ix. 14). This proves that it can *per se* connote "eternal."

(4) That here, where reference is made to the states that follow the Last Judgment, it is used in its fullest sense as an expression for an endless period, is proved incontrovertibly by Matthew xxv. 46. When it is said that the lost shall "go away into everlasting punishment" (or chastisement, *κόλασις*), "the righteous into life eternal," and in both expressions the same word (*αἰώνιος*) is used for everlasting and eternal, surely it cannot in the one phrase mean "a long time" and in the other "an endless time"; for the parallelism forbids that. No assistance whatever is rendered here by all that Farrar and others have twisted round and wrested from that verse; it is and will remain an incontrovertible proof that to the thought of the Judge the state of perdition and the state of bliss are equally eternal,—and that bliss will be eternal in the fullest sense (*i.e.* endless) no one has ventured to deny (*cf.* John vi. 58; Matt. xix. 29; Mark x. 30; John iii. 15; Rom. ii. 7, where the same words *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος* are used of eternal bliss).

That the expression "everlasting death" does not appear in Scripture is true; but when perdition is called "the second death," and the passage referred to shows that this is endless, then it becomes quite scriptural to speak of "everlasting death."

And finally, a great many purely speculative objections have been raised against the doctrine of everlasting damnation as psychologically and physiologically inexplicable. For instance, it has been said that remorse must be an element in the torment of the soul; but if the repentant sinner is better than the one who does not repent, of course the damned must be better than they were in this life; would it then be just if their condition at the same time became worse? (But how is it known that in hell there is any true penitence, *i.e.* a reaction of the soul against the former sinful life?) The body must at last become so accustomed to the physical pain that it eventually becomes a pleasure and is not objected to at all. Another speculative objection against the doctrine of eternal perdition is that it is presumably incompatible with the full bliss of the glorified. These could not be happy—it has been said—when they knew that so many other personal beings were so unhappy. (But if this objection has any validity, then God Himself can never have had any happiness since the fall of the angels and of man.) And another objection is, that the doctrine is irreconcilable with the indefeasible human liberty of a personality, which must always be supposed to render possible a change of mind even for the lost. (But would it not be possible to adduce the same argument in favour of the supposition of an ever-present possibility of a fall on the part of the blest?) The reader who desires to see these objections exhaustively and sagaciously discussed is referred to Schleiermacher's *Der christliche Glaube*, sec. 163, App.

That which perhaps more than anything else has led several usually orthodox theologians to suppose the "restitution of all things" (*ἀποκατάστασις*), *i.e.* the final salvation of all, even of the devil, is probably what Schöberlein calls "the perfect consistency of Christian thought." It has been supposed that the honour of God required that all opposition to Him

should at last be overcome by His saving love (*cf.* Schöberlein's *Das Princip. und System der Dogmatik*, pp. 678-80). But that this view is irreconcilable with Scripture we have already shown. Nor is it required by regard for the honour of God; for when His holy law is satisfied—whether it be to life or to death—then is His honour saved. God glorifies Himself even in the vessels of wrath (Rom. ix. 17).

5. THE TRANSFORMATION OF NATURE

Hitherto we have mainly been speaking of what will happen to humanity when the Lord comes. But something is also to happen to nature. "Heaven and earth shall pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 35). "The heavens and the earth which are now, are reserved unto fire." "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." "The heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved." "Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 7, 10-13). "The fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 31). "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. . . . Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken" (Heb. xii. 26, 27). "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 5). "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. xxi. 1).

Of the many Old Testament passages pointing in the same direction we only mention Psalm cii. 26-28; Isaiah xxxiv. 4, lvi. 6, liv. 10, lxv. 17, lxvi. 22 ("The new heavens and the new earth which I will make").

It is therefore established that even in nature the old will be changed and something new will arise. The question is merely whether this new will proceed from the old (by modification, transformation), and the old therefore be regenerated in the new, or whether the old will be quite annihilated and something new created. Our old theologians generally held the latter view; the modern, on the other hand, favour the former.

Some of the passages indicated (*e.g.*, Isa. xxxiv. 4; 2 Pet.

iii. 10-13) seem undeniably to point to an annihilation of the old. But yet, on the whole, there are such strong arguments in favour of a modification or reformation, that we cannot do otherwise than adopt this view on the following grounds.

1. The very fact that both matter and energy in creation are indestructible, so that it is only the form that changes, makes it natural to suppose that at the last annihilation and re-creation will be unnecessary, and that transformation will be sufficient.

2. It seems to be more worthy of God to reform than to annihilate and re-create (He does not then cast away His own work). That also is what He does at our own regeneration, where the transformation is so complete that it can even be referred to as a new creation (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15).

3. The relation of the old world to history points in the same direction. It has been witness to our state of innocence; it has accompanied us into the state of sin, shared in the consequences of the Fall, been cursed for our sake (Gen. iii. 17). It therefore seems as if something would be lacking in the complete harmony if it were not permitted to accompany us into the state of glory when it will itself become glorified.

4. With this, too, the words of Scripture best accord. Certainly there is mention of a new creation (2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 5); but this need only be so in the same sense as regeneration. And Jesus Himself calls the close of the course of the world "regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28). Then will the old world, with terrible pangs of travail, give birth to the new creation when it becomes transformed. Then will be fulfilled the words: "Thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. civ. 30). This also best explains why the new nature borrows its names from the old (Paradise, the tree of life, the river of life, Rev. ii. 7, xxii. 1, 2). Finally, only in this way can be explained the expectation and longing and groaning of creation in Romans viii. 19-23. It waits for the "manifestation (glorifying) of the sons of God," when it hopes to "be delivered from the bondage of

corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Now this deliverance cannot be annihilation, for it would be contrary to nature to expect that; it must be glorification, participation in the glory of God. Its groaning for this may often be heard as a primitive chord throughout nature. Who has not experienced something of this when the storms of autumn have swept through the fading and falling foliage in forest solitudes!

When will this transformation take place? The period of time we cannot definitely determine. According to Revelation xx. 11, it appears to take place whilst the Judgment is being held. But perhaps the expression here used, "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away," is only to be regarded as a designation of the omnipotence of the Judge, and so far timeless. Since the main purpose of the glorifying of nature must be supposed to be the providing of the proper environment for the bodies of the glorified, it is most natural to place the glorifying of nature in close connection with the glorifying of the redeemed. Whether this takes place immediately before, during, or after the Judgment (the last being the view of our old theologians generally, although they do not supply us with information regarding the habitation of the glorified during this transformation of nature), is a question which we do not mean to attempt to answer.

Connected with this transformation there are several subordinate questions. Will the whole earthly creation appear glorified, *i.e.* individuals, species, and races, both in the present earthly period and in bygone eras? Will the noxious animals of nature (what are the real, noxious animals in the economy of nature?) also reappear, but not as such? (*cf.* Isa. xi. 6-9, lxx. 25). Or will they be ousted from the creation which is glorified, along with the noxious animals of humankind (the ungodly), and have their place in the nature which is the environment of these?

We do not know. But it seems to be most probable that not the individuals but the species in creation will be renovated (yet, what is species? say the Darwinians); for only among personal beings has the individual any independent

significance. Impersonal beings are merely moments in the life of the race.

A most important, but unfortunately unanswerable, question is this: What significance has this transformation of nature for the universe? Does the transformation hold good merely of the earth and what is dependent on it, or does it also penetrate into the immeasurable spaces of heaven with their millions of scintillating stars? The latter depends on whether these exist merely for us, or whether they have their own independent significance. The former is difficult to imagine, although it may seem to find support in the passages of Scripture which, according to the wording, make both heaven and earth the subjects of transformation (*vide* Joel iii. 15; Matt. xxiv. 29; Luke xxi. 25; 2 Pet. iii. 10; Rev. xxi. 1), passages, however, which are scarcely to be regarded literally, or to be referred to heaven in the widest sense (the whole heavenly space). Here also we stand as poor, limited beings who only "know in part."¹

6. ETERNAL LIFE

Concerning the place of abode of the blest we are left in doubt. It will be the new earth, over which a new and glorious heaven will arch (Rev. xxi. 1 *et seq.*), an earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13), and where the "tabernacle of God" will be with men (Rev. xxi. 3), *i.e.* He will dwell personally in their midst. Now for the first time will the beatitude be quite fulfilled, "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt. v. 5). On this earth, and as its real centre, will be "the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This glory of the heavenly city is described for us in considerable detail in the last two chapters of the Revelation, a description in which, however, we cannot separate the reality from the figure.

¹ Some readers are probably acquainted with Flammarion's imaginative book, *Inhabited Worlds* ("La pluralité des mondes habités"). Much more sober is Brewster's *More Worlds than One*. But neither of them has been able to cast much light upon the question, let alone solve it.

So far the matter is clear enough according to Scripture. But then the question arises: In what relation does this city stand to the whole new earth? Will all the inhabitants of the new earth have access to the city? or is that a special glory which will only be reserved for some few elect?

Many, perhaps the majority, suppose that all will dwell in the city; others, that that privilege will fall to the lot of the most advanced; and still others, that the inhabitants of the city will be those who have taken part in "the first resurrection." There are even some who have supposed that those converted after death—especially the heathen—will be relegated to a place without the city. Others, again, have thought that as those less advanced in life and less matured in spiritual development make up for lost time and misused opportunities, they will be gradually transferred to the city. Finally, Kliefoth and others have endeavoured to show that it will be the privilege of Israel to inhabit the new Jerusalem whilst the Gentile-Christians will occupy the new earth outside the city, distributed according to their tribes and nations. In favour of this last view it may be averred that everything in the city is arranged according to the number 12 (12 gates, 12 pearls, 12 kinds of precious stones, 12 foundations, 12,000 furlongs, walls 12 times 12 cubits in height), which corresponds to the number of the tribes of Israel. Then, "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it" (Rev. xxi. 24), and this seems to indicate that their actual dwellings lie outside the city. And again, the waters of the river of life flow through the city, and the leaves of the tree of life are "for the healing of the nations" (Rev. xxii. 2). But not one of these is decisive. The number 12 is also the number of the Church (pp. 235, 236). The nations may easily walk in the light of the city, although they themselves may live in the city; and the kings of the earth may bring their glory thither when all their earthly glory disappears, as dew before the sun, in the glory of the new city. Everything is merged in it. The passage about the waters and the leaves for the healing of the nations is obscure; it may

only mean that bliss will be the proper salve for all the wounds of life, but that need not imply that the wounds still continue and will only gradually be healed. It is with this as with the declaration that in the new Jerusalem God will "wipe away all tears" from the eyes of the blest (Rev. xxi. 4). That does not mean that they will enter eternal life weeping, and the tears will only gradually be dried after they have entered upon it. The meaning is simply that all the tears of the earthly life will in heaven be things of the past. It must further be remembered that the figurative language of the Revelation is based upon that of the Old Testament prophecies (Isa. lx. 3; Ezek. xlvi. 12).

We therefore agree with those who suppose that both "the new Jerusalem" and "the new earth" will be common to all the saved without distinction. And this best accords with the Revelation properly understood. In the new Jerusalem is "the tabernacle of God," but this tabernacle is "with men" (xxi. 3), consequently not merely with Israel. In this city grows "the tree of life" (xxii. 2), but regarding it we are expressly told, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of" it (ii. 7), not merely to be healed by its leaves. And all who do His commandments will "enter in through the gates into the city" (xxii. 14). Moreover, the contrary view is so particularist that it is quite impossible to reconcile it with the conditions that come into force when God becomes all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28).¹

So much as to space. But what is to be said about "time" in eternity? This question may seem to involve a self-contradiction. So many have regarded it, and have therefore maintained that in eternity there can be no suggestion of "time." In support of this they appeal to Revelation x. 6 R.V. ("There shall be time no longer"), a passage, however, which only declares that the event in question

¹ Our old dogmatists never thought of the questions which we have just been considering, for they mostly supposed that the blest after the Judgment were taken up to God in heaven, in direct opposition to Revelation xxi. 1 *et seq.* The result was that they did not know what to make of "the new heaven and the new earth," which Scripture plainly indicates to be the abode of the blest.

would forthwith be completed. We must honestly confess that we cannot see how eternity, to a finite being, can appear otherwise than as an endless time. It is different with the Infinite God. He is in space everywhere present because He embraces all things; and therefore He can at any time survey all time and thus also the whole of eternity. The whole is always equally present to Him, and consequently He is the always Eternal God, the absolutely Timeless. But to give this attribute to a creature is to make it God.

Against this view it has been objected that since to us eternity is only an infinite time, then that which is in part will not be done away; and that if the idea of eternity is regarded as time, and time to us has a beginning, naturally there follows the possibility that it may also have an end. But the objection is pointless. Eternity is a circle. You may enter a circle at any point you please; but when you have entered it, and constantly follow the line, you will never find an end. We enter upon it at the judgment, and then never again leave it; yet we move along the line piece by piece. This is undoubtedly something "in part," but a thing in part which is inseparable from the nature of a finite being. Only the Infinite God covers the whole course at once, and therefore there is no time so far as He is concerned.

It is another thing that in eternity we undoubtedly live through the successive sections of time in another way than in this life. But this we shall be able to understand only when we experience it. At present it is useless to muse about it; but then we shall understand it without musing.¹

Finally, we turn to the question of the state of the blest in eternity.

This must be understood to consist both of negative and positive elements, *i.e.* there is something we are freed from which in this life we had, and something we enjoy which here we lacked.

¹ In Schöberlein's little book, *Zeit und Ewigkeit* (Time and Eternity), we have a brilliant attempt to clear up the conception of eternity. In Scandinavia also there has recently been a controversy over this question (vide *Luth. Kirk.* 1890, i. pp. 81, 101, 145, 202, and 209).

To the former, then, chiefly belong all sufferings, bodily and spiritual,—all death (Luke xx. 36), all sickness and want, all arduous labour, all toil and moil, all grief and care, all anxiety and anguish, all tribulation and misfortune, all persecution and ridicule, all restrictive barriers which our dull and tardy corporeality raises against the free action of our spirit (Rev. vii. 16, xxi. 4).

But all sufferings have their root and ground in sin. Sin is the reproach of nations as of individuals (Prov. xiv. 34), and death itself is its wages. It is on account of sin that suffering comes upon us; for before the Fall there was no suffering. Consequently the cessation of suffering points to the destruction of sin. The one cannot cease without the other. There will be perfect holiness in heaven. Nothing that defileth will enter the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 27).

And not merely from sin itself, but from every temptation to sin, shall we be free. Temptations come from the devil, the world, or our own sinful nature. But from the devil and the world we shall be separated for ever, and what was evil within us will have been eliminated by a blissful death.

From this follows, as a last result, that we shall also be freed from the possibility of sin and fall, the possibility which, during our earthly life, ever broods like a dark and threatening shadow over our spiritual happiness, and induces us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. ii. 12). Thus fear flees for ever, and love is king alone. Now the saying is in truth fulfilled, "There is no fear in love; perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John iv. 18).

That is what we shall be freed from. But what are we to gain? What we gain is partly something outside of us, partly something within ourselves. To the former belongs the glorious habitation which is described in Revelation xxi. and xxii. This description may be regarded mainly as a figurative account of the indescribable glory of the transformed nature, a nature which completely corresponds to our glorified body, for the perfect well-being of which it is a necessary condition. And there will be fellowship with the holy angels and all God's saints from all ages and all

nations. It must be glorious to meet with men like Abraham and Moses, Paul and John, Augustine and Luther, whom God has employed as instruments for the salvation of so many thousands.

Above all this stands the sight of God Himself and the Saviour as our Brother. That "we shall see Him as He is" will be the bliss of bliss (1 John iii. 2). "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). And the more we know the God who is Love (1 John iv. 8) the more we must of necessity love Him, and the closer our love-relationship to Him the greater will be our bliss; for to enjoy God is to enjoy the highest good, and that is bliss.

Yet God Himself will certainly not be the only subject of our recognition and enjoyment. Glorified nature will be the subject of our knowledge, and that a knowledge altogether different from and more thorough than that we at present possess. Our knowledge now, even in its most perfect form, is at the best only knowledge in part, indeed, so incomplete that we do not know anything whatever about the first causes of things. Now nature, as it were, is compelled point by point to give us answers to some of our questions. But then she will voluntarily reveal her secrets to the eyes of the glorified.

And then our own history and that of the human race,—how glorious it will be to have a solution of all the mysteries which we in vain have pondered over and investigated during this life!¹ We have often great difficulty in understanding why God has led us in some particular way, and not as we desired. Then we shall have the explanation. Until that time we must be satisfied with the Lord's words to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii. 7).

And all this knowledge will, not merely in degree but also in kind, be different from our present knowledge. It will be not experimental, bit by bit and inch by inch, but

¹ Cf. Wexel's fine poem, *Tænk, naar engang hver Tænge er forsvunden* ("O think when one day the mists have all faded").

intuitive (1 Cor. xiii. 12) like God's. Yet this latter holds good only of the method of the knowledge, not of its degree; for a creature can never at any time attain to infinite knowledge, and therefore can never fully comprehend the Infinite God. It is enough for our perfect bliss that we learn to know Him so much that the streams of His grace pour over our soul, and that our reciprocal love to Him becomes so great that our will quite accords with His.

But for this new possession of heavenly blessings there must also be a corresponding unfolding of the powers and forces of our own soul-life. These frequently, upon this earth, remain as if in a kind of wrapping. They do not come to any proper maturity. They are only feeble starts towards such. Now will this beginning have its fulfilment, unfold as a bud which is to be a flower.

Scripture describes this state of bliss by many names. In contrast to perdition, which is death, this state is called life, "everlasting life" (Matt. xix. 29; John vi. 27; Rom. vi. 22), "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3, 10), "a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Heb. xii. 28), "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. i. 4), "the crown of life" (Jas. i. 12; Rev. ii. 10), "a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. iv. 8), "the prize of the high calling of God" (Phil. iii. 14), "the paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7), "the marriage of the Lamb" (Rev. xix. 7). The righteous will be permitted to see God's face (Matt. v. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 12), "ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17); yea, they will be like the Lord (1 John iii. 2), and He Himself will lead them unto living fountains of waters and wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more pain (Rev. vii. 16, 17, xxi. 4). They will be priests unto God and His Christ, be clad in long white robes (be pure and unblamable), and carry palm branches in their hands as the signs of victory (Rev. vii. 9, xix. 8); and they both serve Him as priests (Rev. vii. 15, xxii. 3), and reign with Him as kings (2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. xxii. 5). In a word, they have entered into "the joy of their Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21), where they experience the fulfilment of the promise that when the glory of the Lord is revealed

His saints will be glad with exceeding joy (1 Pet. iv. 13). They will eat of the tree of life and of the hidden manna (Rev. ii. 7, 17), and "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43; *cf.* Dan. xii. 3).

The natural expression for this inconceivable glory and gladness is doxology, the extolling of God, who is Himself the most glorious element of all their joy, and who has vouchsafed to the blest all the rest. We must suppose that the blest incessantly praise and magnify the Lord, although, strangely enough, there is nothing said about this after the Judgment. But that is the employment of the holy angels in heaven (Rev. v. 11, 12, vii. 11, 12); and if the saved are said to do the same even before the Judgment (Rev. xiv. 2, 3, xv. 2-4), how much more shall they sing praise when their happiness and bliss have attained their completion, and they have so much greater reason for gratitude and thanksgiving than before.

Scoffers have said: What a monotonous and tiresome life! Only one pleasure, the seeing of God!—and only one employment, extolling Him!

To this we can only answer, that such scoffers must have a poor conception of the infiniteness of God. Even on this earth we do not easily tire of seeing and admiring, when we are ever seeing and hearing something new,—new landscapes, new pictures, new music, etc. And will not the Infinite God be able constantly to present something new to us, show new sides of His being, open one window after the other of the infinite building of His nature, and give us glimpses of His secrets? Is there any danger of our ever coming to the end of our knowledge of what is infinite? And then the glorified nature,—what a wide field it already opens to our knowledge, our enjoyment, and our gladness! On earth, mortals do tire at last of observing and enjoying, even if the beauty be of the fairest and the variety be almost infinite. But the possibility of being tired must be understood to be excluded from bliss; for that possibility is irreconcilable with absolute well-being.

If the source of our joy and admiration be inexhaustible,

we can easily understand that even the praising of God may be unending without becoming "tiresome."

Out of that which is plainly taught in Scripture many supplementary questions arise which we can only partially answer, and which, therefore, we shall only briefly touch upon.

Are there degrees in bliss? No, not in bliss, but in glory. Every one will get what he is capable of receiving, and then he will be perfectly blessed; but not all are capable of receiving the same. All vessels will be filled, but all do not contain the same quantity. Not all who are saved have reached the same stage of development. There is mention of those who are great, and of those who are small in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. v. 19, xi. 11); of those who are set over five, and of those set over ten cities, because the one had only secured five and the other ten pounds (Luke xix. 15-19); but to all it is said, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 20-23). "One star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. xv. 41). "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3). Bliss (*i.e.* the feeling of perfect well-being, without any drawback, without any lack) is a gift enjoyed by all in virtue of their connection with the Saviour through faith; but the degree of glory is a reward of grace according to every man's work (1 Cor. iii. 13-15. Notice what has already been said about the awards at the judgment, pp. 423-26). But the one who receives less glory will not feel the lack of the greater glory, or envy those who do receive it. Each is perfectly happy with what he has received.¹

Is there any development in eternity? The answer depends on the relation in which we consider eternity stands to the conception of time; for development presupposes time within which it can take place. If we are right in supposing

¹ That in the Father's house there will be many mansions (John xiv. 2) we do not venture—as so many have done—to regard as an expression implying degrees in glory. It only indicates that there will be room enough for all who are saved.

that the creature must regard eternity as an endless time, we do not see why there may not also be development, and along with that an increasing glory.

Will there be any language in eternity?—if so, what? Many of the ancients assumed that in eternity all would speak Hebrew, which they summarily supposed to be the original language common to Paradise and remote antiquity!¹ We can with certitude only say that there must be some means of intercommunication of thought between the blessed mutually, and between them and God. The world of the blessed cannot be a dumb world. That, indeed, would very poorly agree with what is told us of the heavenly thanksgivings and the music on “the harps of God” (Rev. xiv. 2, 3, xv. 2–4). But of what nature this intercommunication of thought is to be—whether it will resemble some earthly language, and in that case, which—we have no information whatever.

Will there be any activity in bliss? On this point also the Word of God says nothing definitely. But the state of bliss is designated as life, and life implies activity. Wherein such activity—in addition to the continued knowledge of God and creation, and to the magnifying of God—will consist, we know nothing. But it cannot be a labour in the sweat of the brow, for that is a result of sin (Gen. iii. 17–19). On the other hand, labour, work *per se*, belonged even to the state of innocence (Gen. ii. 15), yea, belongs to God Himself, for the Saviour says, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John v. 17). It is perhaps only with respect to work as toil and moil that the blest are said to “rest from their labours” (Rev. xiv. 13). “There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God” (Heb. iv. 9).²

Some have ventured so far as to indicate what employments may find place in eternity, and what not (*e.g.*, they have eliminated police and military service, but retained

¹ *Vide* Dahle's *Bibelske Foredrag* (Biblical Lectures), pp. 183–86, 197 *et seq.*

² Kliefoth expresses this relation thus: “The perfected have a life of activity, a living fellowship and a development of life in time and space” (*Eschatologie*, p. 322).

agriculture, etc.); but it is much better to acknowledge ignorance. They have even thought that regular "divine services" will be held on the new earth; but what can be the object of such in an existence where all activity must be service of God? And then there will be no temple in the New Jerusalem; for "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev. xxi. 22).

Will there be recollection and recognition in eternity? Undoubtedly. Without recollection of our past we could have no clear consciousness of the fact that we were the identical persons who had lived and worked upon the earth,—would not be able to preserve the continuity in our personal life. And without this we could have no idea whatever of the justice of the relation which will exist between our earthly life and our eternal lot, when the Lord will reward every man according to his works. If the justice of this "reward" is to be quite clear to us, we must also remember these works. Without this we can have no certainty that the man who has done the works is identical with the one who, at the Judgment, is punished or rewarded for them. Nor will we be able to recognise our resurrection body as our own, except by the aid of the recollection of its characteristics in the earthly life. We learn from the Word of God that they who appear before the judgment-seat remember well their works (*vide* especially Matt. vii. 22; *cf.* xxv. 35). Our sins we shall certainly remember, but as forgiven sins, to the praise of the grace of God. That the dead drink of the "river of forgetfulness" is not a Christian but a heathen thought. Recollection will doubtless in eternity be much more perfect than now. An indication of this we may find in the ecstatic states in which a man suddenly remembers much that he had long ago forgotten. It is therefore probable that in eternity we shall remember all that we have ever known.

But if we remember our past, we must also remember those we have lived with, those in connection with whom most of our acts have been done. And if these—as we have previously shown—preserve the characteristics of their bodies, why should we not recognise them? The disciples

recognised Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, although they had not seen them previously, but only heard of them; how much more readily, then, shall we, in the transfiguration, recognise them whom we have known during our earthly career. Perhaps we shall also recognise many of whom we have only heard.

Hence it follows that we shall recognise our friends, our spouses, our children, our teachers and leaders as such. But shall we in eternity stand in any closer relation to these than to the other saints? To this we do not venture to give any answer, since the Word of God is silent on the point. It might *per se* seem natural that such should be the case. But yet it is a question whether such formation of narrower sets, private circles, family parties, within the fellowship of the blest, would be reconcilable with the nature of that fellowship in which God will be "all in all."

Will the saints have any consciousness of the torments of the damned? Since they have heard the sentence the damned received (Matt. xxv. 41 *et seq.*), and miss them from among the blest, they must also have a consciousness of their perdition. That this, however, does not interfere with their own happiness follows from the nature of bliss, for bliss is uninterrupted happiness. But how this is we cannot psychologically explain. Yet the same thing holds good of God's bliss both now and in eternity. How can He who is Love be happy and yet know that every moment, since the fall of the angels, there have been so many personal beings whom He has created and loved who are so infinitely unhappy? And yet He is called the blessed God (1 Tim. vi. 15). Undoubtedly it surpasses our comprehension,—but then, that comprehension does not reach so very far.

Finally, some have asked whether the blessed will continue to regard things only with the five senses, as now, and whether the respective spheres of activity of those senses will be the same as during the earthly life. Nor can we answer this question satisfactorily. Yet a negative answer seems the most natural. If knowledge is to be intuitive, and that which is "in part" is to cease, it will give a complete survey of things. In this survey the limits

between the domains of the different senses will become impalpable, and this again seems to imply that even the limits placed by the senses between the properties of things (*i.e.* what we can observe by sight, hearing, smell, etc.) will wholly or partially disappear. We can therefore well imagine that Norman Pearson may be right when he hints that in the future life the saints may possibly enjoy the pleasure of a beautiful picture merging into music, and music dissolving into perfume.¹

We might suggest such questions *ad infinitum*. But we prefer to conclude by pointing to the fundamental relation which appears in eternity when the kingdom of the Son becomes the Father's. Everything has originally issued from the Father; but in the kingdom of grace on earth it is the Son who governs all as the King of grace, working through the Spirit, in order to lead everything which will allow itself to be led, back to the Father. Now this work of mediation has been completed, consequently now begins the Father's everlasting kingdom of glory. It is that the apostle refers to when he says: "When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28). In bliss the Father's will governs everything and all people, and the fulness of His life will permeate all; His glory will be admired and praised by all,—yet so that the whole Trinity is also included in it.

There is much concerning which we still lack full clearness with respect to the life of the blest. How could it be otherwise? "The things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" are indeed what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. ii. 9). We must therefore be prepared for many glorious surprises when, by the grace of God, we at length enter the Holy City. But this we, who believe, do know with certainty,—a blessed certainty which nothing will be able to shake,—that those who are faithful unto death shall receive the crown of life; that when "the ransomed of the

¹ *Vide* article in *Nineteenth Century* for 1883, pp. 212 *et seq.* The author is an evolutionist.

Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. xxxv. 10); that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall *we* also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

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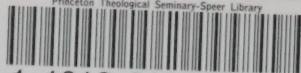
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